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Issue No 78

Available from Wednesday,
March 11, 2009

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ART CENTRE OF BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**HAZLITT
ARTS
CENTRE**

ARTISTS from across the district are being asked to submit their work as part of a celebration of Maidstone's new Hazlitt Arts Centre.

Yourmaidstone is supporting the first birthday events which will give one artist the chance to have a four-week exhibition in the Graham Clarke Gallery, in Earl Street.

It is open to any one over 18, but they must not have exhibited before.

The winner will be chosen from five finalists who will be selected in May.

The competition is titled StARTle 2009 and is a combined effort by Maidstone council and the Hazlitt Art Centre staff to mark the first birthday of the centre.

Highlights of the venue's first year have

■ BY ANNA WHITE

included Christmas panto Jack and the Beanstalk, 4 Poofs and a Piano – the live band on Friday Night with Jonathan Ross TV show – and award-winning comedian Jason Manford.

Maidstone council's cabinet member for leisure and culture, councillor Brian Moss, said: "The art competition is a new idea for this year to celebrate the birthday and I would encourage as many people as possible to enter because you could have the chance of winning a free exhibition."

Entrants entries can be in any form, from sculpture to work on canvas. The submissions will be judged and five shortlisted artists will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Picture ADY KERRY

WATCH THE BIRDIE

Golf star Dani Masters celebrated her marriage to Jon Twaites at her sponsor club Chart Hills on Saturday.

The 25-year-old, from Maidstone, married Mr Twaites in a ceremony at Boxley Church in front of family and friends.

The wedding party then made their way to the Chart Hills golf club to host the reception. The married couple are now on honeymoon in the Lake District – where Mr Twaites proposed.

The bride's mother Glenis Masters told Yourmaidstone: "It was brilliant, the weather was gorgeous and we really couldn't have asked for a better day. Chart Hills was excellent and really made it extra special."

The newlywed will take on her husband's name, but will keep her maiden name for her golf career.

The golfer lost her place on the Ladies European Tour in January after missing the second half of last season with a back injury.

She plans to return for the Turkish Ladies Open in May.

ISSN 1753-121-7



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NEWS EDITOR: Jon Coates 01303 817048

GROUP EDITOR: Gary Wright 01303 817032

WEBSITE: www.yourmaidstone.co.uk

TELEPHONE ADVERTISING: 01303 817110

FAX: (Advertising) 01303 817002

EMAIL: Editorial: yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk. Sales: advertising@kosmedia.co.uk

HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR

Printed by Newsfax

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School's track hopes to be in 2012 running

BY ANNA WHITE

WORK has started on a state-of-the-art athletics track in Maidstone to ensure it is ready for teams to use in training for the London 2012 Olympics.

Bulldozers and a JCB digger began to prepare the foundations of the new track at Sutton Valence School, which will cost about £800,000, last Wednesday.

The launch was attended by the school's headmaster Joe Davies, Maidstone council cabinet member for leisure and culture Brian Moss, and Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club chairman Paul Alcock.

The independent school was confirmed as an official training centre for the London 2012 Olympics last year.

It will bid to host athletics, badminton, basketball, fencing and archery teams.

The new track will be shared between the school, Medway and Maidstone Athletic Club and other local athletes.

Floodlighting

Medway and Maidstone Athletic Club has 350 members aged seven to 70, including some of Britain's best prospects. It has several athletes in the top five in their event in this country. The club will use the Sutton Valence track on Monday to Thursday evenings and on Sundays.

Mr Alcock claims the new development will be one of the finest in the region.

He said: "It is a facility we've been looking forward to for 25 years."

The track, which is due to open this summer, is being jointly funded by the school and the council.

Cllr Moss added: "The council supports this facility because it will



BIG PLANS: Joe Davies (centre) flanked by (left) Medway & Maidstone Athletics Club chairman Paul Alcock and Cllr Brian Moss

provide first-class training facilities for our athletes."

The track, floodlighting and race officials' facilities are being constructed by West Kingsdown, Kent-based specialist AMB Sports and Polytan of Loughborough, whose clients include the Crystal Palace athletics stadium.

Sutton Valence, which was founded in 1576, has been involved for several years in initiatives to engage with local organisations, state schools and the community.

More than 20 local cricket, football, hockey and other sports clubs already use pitches and training facilities at Sutton Valence.

Other organisations also use the school's theatre, opened last year by Dame Judi Dench, and swimming pool, which is also being upgraded.

• Email yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Doors close on shop that founded empire

DESIGNER fashion chain Karen Millen closed its original store on Saturday after the company failed to secure its future.

Members of staff at the Royal Star Arcade branch were told on Monday last week the shop which founded the fashion empire was closing its doors for good at the weekend.

Maidstone-born designer Karen Millen, who now lives in Watlington, sold her self-titled chain to the Mosaic Group in June 2004.

Some of the Karen Millen stores have been saved after Mosaic went into administration.

Homes lose electricity for hours after failure

THOUSANDS of families living in the Shepway area of Maidstone spent eight hours without power on Friday after EDF Energy suffered two faults in its supply network.

After two early morning power cuts, the energy supplier was not able to get the supply back to 272 homes in Oxford Road.

The company was forced to switch-off the power to several thousand customers from 1pm while engineers carried out urgent repairs at a substation in Maidstone.

The electricity was not brought back on until 9.30pm.

Final curtain for telly magician Ali Bongo

A MAGICIAN who inspired the bizarre Adam Klaus character in the Jonathon Creek TV mysteries has died after suffering a stroke.

Ali Bongo, real name William Wallace, passed away on Sunday, aged 79. He was educated at Sutton Valence School in Maidstone.

Bongo became an advisor on David Nixon's Magic Box TV show until 1971, when he was given his own children's show Zokko.

The magician worked as an advisor on many TV shows including Doctor Who, The Tomorrow People and The Paul Daniels Magic Show.

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Freight depot decision out of council's hands

Secretary of state to have final say

■ BY ANNA WHITE

COMMUNITIES secretary Hazel Blears will decide whether a giant road-rail freight depot is built on open countryside near Bearsted.

Maidstone council has confirmed that an appeal to go straight to a public inquiry by the developers behind Kent International Gateway has been approved.

The applicant had lodged the appeal claiming the local authority was taking too long to decide on the planning application for the depot.

The matter will now go before the planning inspectorate at a public inquiry. But due to the high-profile nature of the depot, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Ms Blears has called in the matter to make the final decision after the inquiry.

If the minister approves the application a giant road-rail freight depot, which incorporates plans to install buildings for warehousing, distribution and offices, research, development and light industrial units, will be built on the site just off the M20 at Hollingbourne.

Maidstone council now has six weeks to hold a planning meeting to decide how it would have ruled on the proposal and then submit a writ-



GATEWAY: The area of countryside under consideration for development by communities secretary Hazel Blears, inset

ten statement setting out its case to the planning inspectorate. The 3,500 comments which people submitted on the proposal since it was first registered in October 2007 will be considered when debating the application.

The venue for the planning committee meeting, which will be held by April 6, will accommodate as many people as possible to hear the debate, and a live webcast will be shown on the council's website.

The council's director of prosperity and regeneration Alison Broom said: "KIG only recently supplied some of the information we requested so it is disappointing they have appealed."

"The planning committee will consider the comments submitted before it decides its position on the proposal. Representatives of local

people will have a chance to make their views known to the inspector."

Details of the meeting are due to be released later this week.

Hugh Robertson, Conservative MP for Mid Kent and Faversham, has been fighting to stop KIG going ahead.

After learning the appeal for the KIG planning application to go straight to a public inquiry had been approved, he said: "This is clearly very disappointing but not critical."

"The key thing now is for everybody opposed to the development to mould their resources and work together so we give the government inspector a really clear message this development is completely unsupported and totally inappropriate."

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Free family fun at centre celebration

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
be chosen to go through to the final stage and present their work on May 20.

The judges will be led by Maidstone artist Graham Clarke, and will include news editor of Your maidstone Jon Coates, Maidstone council's marketing manager Vronni Ward, and a representative for the University of the Creative Arts.

The winner of StARTle 2009 will be announced at 7.30pm during the Hazlitt's big birthday bash, which will feature a performance by top British comedian Mark Steel, on Saturday, May 30, in the Exchange Studio.

During the day there will be various free activities and performances for all of the family, which will be revealed in Yourmaidstone in the forthcoming weeks.

A ticket for the comedy show is £13, for over 18s only.

To enter work for the competition please send a high resolution image of the submission, your name, address, email and a short supporting statement to Vronni Ward, marketing manager, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ. Closing date is May 13.

'Planning consent trade bid a costly waste of money'

A PARISH council has accused county planners of getting too close to business in an attempt to get a village bypass built cheaply.

Wrotham Parish Council vice chairman Cllr Pete Gillin says Kent County Council made costly mistakes which have wasted taxpayers' money.

The row centres on KCC accepting an offer from aircrete manufacturing firm H+H Celcon in 2003 to build the long-awaited Borough Green bypass for free in return for permission to build a new factory next to their existing site in Ightham, which falls inside the protected Green Belt area.

KCC renewed planning permission which had been granted ten years earlier but not been acted on.

Wrotham and Ightham parish councils appealed against this decision on the grounds the original certificate had expired in 1997, making it invalid.

H+H Celcon then attempted to withdraw its application, which

would have left the parish councils to foot the bill for the public inquiry.

The Planning Inspectorate has now ruled KCC and the developer were at fault and ordered H+H Celcon to pay the parish councils costs up to May 11, 2007, and for KCC to pay the remaining amount and some of the company's costs. The total bill is estimated at £130,000.

Cllr Gillin said: "KCC, as the planning authority, allowed themselves to become far too close to a multinational company who wanted to trade planning consent, in a highly protected area of Green Belt and Outstanding Natural Beauty, for a road that if necessary should be paid for by public funds."

A KCC spokesman said: "Kent County Council has received a copy of the inspector's decision. It's a relatively complicated decision and there are a number of matters that will need to be clarified before the full implications can be assessed."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Charity appeal to help pensioners keep homes

A CHARITY has launched an appeal to stop elderly people being forced out of their residential home because of low funds.

The Abbeyfield Kent Society launched the Who Cares? appeal in front of several town mayors and stakeholders at the Marriot Tudor Park Hotel, in Maidstone, on February 27.

The Christian charity runs nine care homes and seven sheltered schemes in Kent, including sites in Larkfield, Watlingtonbury and Old Tovil Road, Maidstone.

Awards galore for health trust's top-quality services

BENENDEN Hospital Trust has been named the top healthcare employer in the UK for the third-year running on a prestigious list of healthcare services.

The hospital, near Cranbrook picked up six awards: Top Healthcare Employer, Overall Winner, Top Healthcare Employer in the field of Work Life Balance, Top Employer in the field of Performance Management, Top Healthcare Employer in the field of Leadership and Top Independent Employer.

Scheme to provide better choice of council housing

A COUNTYWIDE scheme to give social housing residents a better choice of properties is being introduced by Maidstone council.

The Kent Homechoice programme will be launched in the next few months. It will allow people to look through a range of available homes listed in a newsletter and online every two weeks.

For more information visit www.kenthomechoice.org.uk or call Kaks Chahal or Rebecca Winner on 01622 602 812.

Primary school pupils put on arts show for mayor

YOUNGSTERS wowed the Mayor of Maidstone when they treated her to a special arts performance.

Children from five primary schools in the county town jumped on stage on Tuesday last week at Maidstone Town Hall to showcase their last performance.

The show was put together by The Hazlitt's Youth Theatre team, which worked with the children as part of a project funded by the Prince's Trust.

Rock group show metal after death of bandmate

■ BY ANNA WHITE

AN UP-and-coming metal band is looking to win a national talent contest and land a recording contract after overcoming the death of a band member.

VenXia took a six month break to grieve the loss of guitarist Dave Burns, who founded the group with school friend Ray Hughes, in a car crash at the start of last year.

But after deciding to stay together as a band the five-piece hard-core metal act from Maidstone are just one step away from the final stage of the Live and Unsigned Competition.

They have already got through a heat to get to the regional finals in Guildford, Surrey, on April 5.

If they manage to wow the judges at this stage they will then go forward to the national final on May 10.

VenXia have been together for about two years and have played numerous gigs and competitions in Kent - including winning Maidstone's Battle of the Bands in 2007.

The band was formed by singer and guitarist Ray, 23, and guitarist Dave, who both attended the Cornwallis School.

The two later recruited singer Aidan Dunn, 21, Peter Jordan, 23, on drums and former Cornwallis school-friend Lex Giggis, 23, as the band's bass player.

After taking time to get over Dave's tragic death they decided he could never be replaced but that they wanted to keep going and found



PLAYING ON: VenXia are back after taking time out after the death of group founder and guitarist Dave Burns

new guitarist Byron Gilbert, 19, and returned to the music scene.

During the second-half of last year VenXia focused on recording music and building up their following on social networking websites like Myspace and Facebook - attracting thousands of fans worldwide.

Their gigs have started to attract high profile bands and clothing labels wanting to support them. The band now also sells its own merchandise for their fans to buy through Myspace.

VenXia say they can make it big if they are given the chance.

If they go through to the final and win Live

and Unsigned 2009 they will be awarded a recording contract and have the chance to release a single.

Lex said: "It's a great opportunity and we are excited and lucky to have the chance to play our music in a competition of this scale."

"But even if we don't get further than the next stage, we will still carry on making the music we love, but it would be awesome to win."

"There is a wide range of talent out there and we hope to stand out from the rest, and impress the judges"

• To find out more about VenXia or to buy tickets for the regional final on April 5 visit www.myspace.com/venxia.

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Makeover star offers tips at surgery

HUNDREDS of women spent an evening listening to makeover guru Nicky Hambleton-Jones talk about how they could make themselves look younger.

The former presenter of Channel 4's 10 Years Younger TV show spoke to guests at Transform Cosmetic Surgery, at Turkey Mill in Ashford Road, Maidstone, on Thursday.

After an audience question and answer session with Ms Hambleton-Jones, surgeons on the clinic carried out live demonstrations of non-surgical treatments such as botox, dermal fillers and microdermabrasion.

There was also a presentation about the variety of laser treatments the clinic has to offer. Two lucky women also won the chance to have a one-

to-one consultation with Ms Hambleton-Jones.

Penny McNab, from Harriestsham, won a personal consultation and Renee Street, from Whitstable, won a consultation and £500 non-surgical vouchers.

The former TV star also gave Yourketntv reporter Julie Maddocks an exclusive one-to-one, and gave her tips on how she could make herself look younger.

Mrs Maddocks told Yourmaidstone the most asked about treatment on the night was cosmetic dental surgery, such as teeth whitening.

Guests left the evening with goody bags filled with fashion and beauty products including Sculptura lip balms, Restalyne post treatment creams and discount vouchers for Myla Underwear.

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DISPLAYS: Airfield will stage Combined Ops – Military Vehicle and Vintage Aircraft weekend in August

Military craft to combine for weekend show

A NEW event combining military vehicles and vintage aircraft is set to launch this summer.

The Invicta Military Vehicle Preservation Society (IMPS) has teamed up with Headcorn Aerodrome to present the Combined Ops – Military Vehicle and Vintage Aircraft weekend.

The title Combined Ops is taken from an old military term used when two services, like the Army and RAF, would join forces during war.

The airfield will stage displays by military vehicles, and vintage military and civil aircraft, including famous Second World War planes and tanks.

There will also be militaria stalls, food and a beer tent during the weekend of August 15 to 16. Spectators will be treated to fly-in arena action, reconstructions of tank and armour battles, plus living history displays.

The airfield has its own museum on site, which will tie in with the day's events.

This is first time IMPS has worked alongside Headcorn Aerodrome and the society's spokesman Nigel Hay says they are looking forward to the event.

He said: "The aerodrome has a historic background, as have we, and there is a long history of synergising aircraft and military vehicles.

■ BY ANNA WHITE

"I think it is a great combination and we hope it attracts a lot of public attention, as it will be a great day out for families."

Jamie Freeman, from Headcorn Aerodrome, said: "The IMPS picked us because we have a strong history with military vehicles – we even have our own history museum.

"We are very excited they have chosen to come and it would be great to see families coming along to see the show, we are hoping to price tickets as low as possible to encourage people to come along."

IMPS already has a strong connection with Maidstone dating back 27 years and hosts the War and Peace Show every year at the Hop Farm, in Paddock Wood, which this year falls on July 22 to 26.

Mr Hay added: "The IMPS chairman, Jim Baxter, and I both want to stress the War and Peace Show is still going strongly ahead and this is just a new and exciting event for us."

The Combined Ops weekend opens on both days at 10am.

Tickets for adults will cost £7, children £4, senior citizens £4, children aged up to seven go in free, and a family ticket is £15.

• For more information call Malcolm on 01303 267271, or 07780993018, or email mgdunlop@aol.com.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Vital funds to save church

A GRADE-II listed church has been awarded nearly £170,000 for urgent repairs to its roof.

St Peter and St Paul's Church, in Leybourne, was chosen as one of 12 churches in Kent to receive a share of £1,777,000 English Heritage funding.

The £169,000 windfall from the organisations' Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme go towards repairs to the damaged roof, which has been estimated at £280,000.

The roof has deteriorated so much that it has started to fall into the building.

About £20,000 was raised by people sponsoring one of the new 2,000 roof tiles needed and the church also received a £10,000 grant from Friends of Kent Churches organisation.

Other fund-raising efforts in the community and the heritage grant means the organisation needs to find about £43,000 to finish the repairs.

Friar Matthew Buchan said: "We are delighted with the generosity the English Heritage has shown us. Without them we would struggle to repair this historic and beautiful building."

Mallett to hit town again

I'M A Celebrity star Timmy Mallett is set to return to Maidstone after his appearance last year was a smash hit.

The former presenter of children's show Wacaday will host charity event It's a Knockout! for a second time at Mote Park on Sunday May 31.

Teams of up to ten people are being sought to join in the fun. Each team member needs to raise £100 in sponsorship.

Proceeds will go to Children Today – a charity which helps disabled children and young people achieve their full potential.

Rod tribute curries favour

A ROD Stewart tribute act wowed the crowds at a charity curry dinner and helped raise £400 for a charity.

Hi Kent, the county's charity for deaf and hard of hearing people, received the cheque at The Raja of Kent restaurant in Maidstone.

During the evening on February 25, Paul Metcalfe, who is regarded as the country's leading Rod Stewart tribute act, had diners dancing and singing along to all Rod's hits.

The next tribute night at The Raja, in Union Street, will be a Michael Jackson show on March 25.

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Training highlights from hairdressers

YOURMAIDSTONE reporter Anna White became a trainee hairdresser for a day as part of National Apprentice Week.

Lau Hairdressers in Gabriel's Hill, Maidstone, opened its doors to her to give a glimpse into the lives of its five apprentices.

Watch this video clip to see salon manager Shelley Baynard teaching apprentice Amy Meering how to highlight hair and hear them talk about the benefits of on-the-job training.

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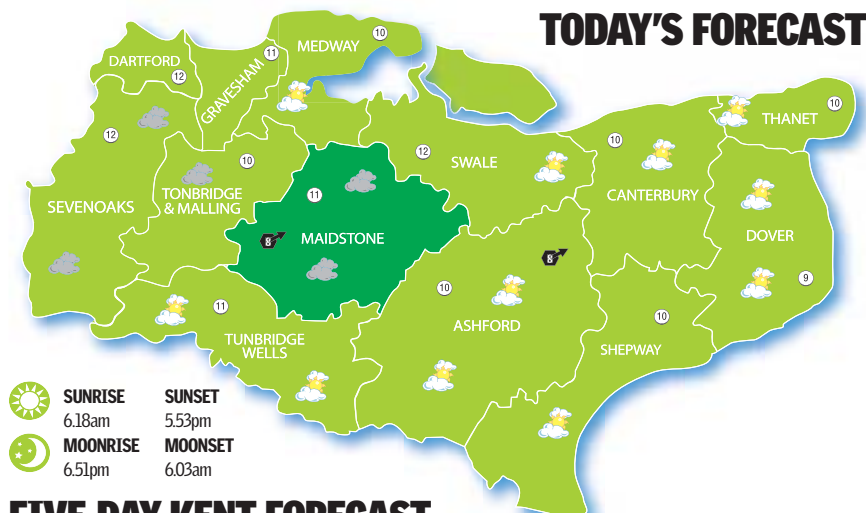
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	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	11°C	12°C	12°C	12°C	12°C	Gravesend	11°C	12°C	13°C	12°C	12°C
Canterbury	9°C	10°C	12°C	11°C	10°C	Maidstone	11°C	11°C	12°C	12°C	12°C
Chatham	10°C	10°C	12°C	10°C	11°C	Ramsgate	9°C	10°C	12°C	11°C	10°C
Dartford	11°C	12°C	13°C	12°C	12°C	Rochester	10°C	10°C	12°C	10°C	11°C
Dover	9°C	9°C	10°C	10°C	10°C	Sevenoaks	9°C	10°C	11°C	10°C	10°C
Faversham	10°C	10°C	12°C	10°C	11°C	Sittingbourne	10°C	10°C	12°C	10°C	11°C
Folkestone	9°C	9°C	10°C	10°C	10°C	Tonbridge	11°C	12°C	12°C	12°C	11°C
Gillingham	10°C	10°C	12°C	10°C	11°C	Tun Wells	11°C	12°C	12°C	12°C	11°C

WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	2:52pm	6.1m
	Sunday	3:25pm	5.9m
Dover	Saturday	1:03pm	6.5m
	Sunday	1:36pm	6.4m
Dungeness	Saturday	1:03pm	7.6m
	Sunday	1:39pm	7.3m
Ramsgate	Saturday	1:33pm	5.0m
	Sunday	2:06pm	4.8m
Sheerness	Saturday	2:42pm	5.8m
	Sunday	3:15pm	5.6m
Whitstable	Saturday	2:56pm	5.2m
	Sunday	3:24pm	5.1m

AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	7°C	Madrid	15°C
Athens	16°C	New York	14°C
Barcelona	15°C	Paris	10°C
Beijing	8°C	Rome	14°C
Bombay	32°C	Sydney	22°C
Cape Town	31°C	Tenerife	20°C
Cardiff	9°C	Tokyo	11°C
Gibraltar	16°C	Vancouver	5°C
Hong Kong	17°C	Warsaw	4°C
Las Palmas	20°C	Wellington	17°C



ROUND THE BEND: Crayford dog track has changed days

Friday night now the new night for a trip to the dogs

TOP dogs will soon be bounding out of the traps at Crayford on Friday nights – in a major change to the track's weekly meets.

The established racetrack is switching its Monday night meet to Friday and is determined to attract more people from Kent.

The last Monday meet will be held on April 6 and the first Friday one on April 17.

To mark the move, racetrack chiefs have lowered the meal deal ticket for both Friday and Saturday nights. A three-course meal, including entry and a race card, will cost £27.50 per head, down from the old Saturday night price of £33.

Crayford Greyhound Track's marketing manager Diana Illingworth said: "The move from Monday to Friday is a big change for us, but it puts all of our weekly races at the end of the week. We'll have the three matinees – Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday – as well as Friday and Saturday nights."

"We're really looking forward to it and hope we'll tempt more corporate visitors to enjoy a night out at our racetrack."

"We'll be listening to our customers' needs and develop the new Friday night accordingly."

The first Friday race will get underway at 7.30pm. Gates open at 6.15pm. Entry costs £6 per person and includes a race card.

For more information visit www.crayford.com.

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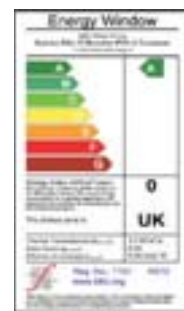
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QUESTION & ANSWER

CHRIS ROSS



Q Tell us a little bit about yourself

A I'm the general manager at Mote House retirement village, having worked in the hotel and catering industry since I did work experience aged 15. My background has given me a greater understanding of how important team work and the contribution each member of staff makes. Hospitality is what I do best and I relish the challenges that each day presents.

Q Why did you decide to move away from the hotel industry into Audley?

A Throughout my career within the hotel industry I have taken a hands-on approach but Audley brings that concept one stage further by providing homeowners with a lifestyle that can provide every service you could think of at your fingertips. It's my responsibility to ensure that these expectations are met and it was a challenge that I couldn't refuse.

Q Which aspects of your experience in the hotel industry have you taken with you to Audley?

A Business strategy, organisational management and exceeding levels of customer service are vital in my new role.

Q What do you find most rewarding in your role as general manager at Mote House?

A I've been lucky to come in at the start of the project and see firsthand the wonderful

preservation work that has been carried out on the site. Mote House will be stunning when it's completed and I can't wait to experience the buzzing and thriving community that will evolve here.

Q Tell us about the development of Grade II listed Mote House into an Audley Retirement Village.

A Mote House is a beautiful Grade II listed mansion, which had been neglected. Audley is renovating the house to become the focal point of the luxury retirement village containing a range of superb facilities which you would expect to see in a country house hotel. All Audley residents automatically become members of the Audley Club and will have access to a quality restaurant, bistro bar, library and health and well-being centre including a splash pool, therapy rooms and even a hair salon.

Q Are you going to maintain the building's historic character?

A Definitely, Mote House is an important asset for Maidstone and my team and I are passionate about it. We're working closely with English Heritage at every stage of the restoration, ensuring the original features are preserved or replicated in cases of severe damage.

Q Have you received a good response since Mote House was launched?

A We have received an excellent response to date.

Q How many residents do you currently have?

A We currently have four residents and a number of people looking to purchase once we've launched Gatehouse Lodge in the spring.

Q What is life like for residents at Mote House?

A The Audley village will consist of 86 traditionally-built spacious homes, ideal for the over 55s who want to live in their own home whilst enjoying the benefits of a country house hotel. There will be plenty of social opportunities such as theatre trips, themed dining and health classes.

Q What makes Mote House different to any other retirement village?

A Its unique location on the outskirts of Kent's county town. The Grade II-listed Georgian mansion is the focal point, housing the Audley Club facilities and which will contain our exclusive Audley Club. The result is a small village that's part of the local community, yet boasts 24-hour security. There is also a team of on-site staff to help you as and when you require.

Q How can people find out more about Audley retirement and Mote House?

A Information is available at www.audleyretirement.co.uk, and the Marketing Suite is open daily from 10am to 5pm.

Q & A

The general manager at Audley Mote House talks to **Anna White** about the renovation of the Grade II listed mansion, what people can expect from it and what life is like for the over 55s at the retirement village

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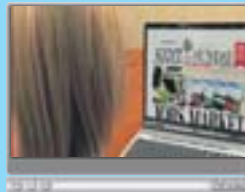




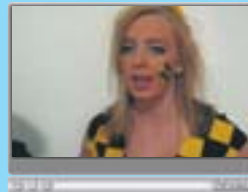
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Folkestone is rocked by another earthquake. Search 'earthquake'



Go Green - Read It Free On Screen TV commercial. Search 'green'



Students talk about Marlowe Academy Fashion Show. Search 'Marlowe'



Police launch crackdown on drivers not wearing seatbelts. Search 'police'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

You can view all these videos and others from around the county with the click of a mouse at...

yourkenttv.co.uk

Historic tour had me flying high out of economic gloom

BY SIMON ROBINSON

IN these darkened days of almost apocalyptic credit crunch misery, there's precious little to put a smile on our frown-filled faces.

The housing market is in freefall, the banks have posted record billion pound losses and thousands of workers are being made redundant nationwide each day. Gillingham FC will probably miss out on promotion too.

In these desperate times it's important to seek out moments of positivity - things which will hopefully help turn that frown upside down.

My pick-me-up came by way of an hour-long helicopter tour of Kent.

The county boasts a plethora of historic landmarks and seeing them in all their glory from 1,500ft was simply breathtaking.

During the county-wide tour we cruised over sites such as Canterbury Cathedral and Leeds Castle, taking in the picturesque sights from the comfort of our £1 million chopper - previously owned by '80s electro legends Depeche Mode no less.

There is something strangely relaxing in looking down at the world from on high - with the unfamiliar view of familiar towns, motorways, castles, harbours and so forth rendering myself and my fellow passengers speechless.

The Kent tour took us in a giant circle, starting at Rochester Airport before heading east to Whitstable, then on to Canterbury, Dover, Cranbrook, Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and Maidstone before returning to base.

At each location we slowly circled popular tourist attractions.

Dover was a particular high-point of the flight,



HIGH POINTS: The county boasts a plethora of historic landmarks and seeing them in all their glory from 1,500ft was simply breathtaking including Leeds Castle (above) and the cathedral in Canterbury (above right)

Pictures TONY STIGLE



with the clear blue skies giving a spectacular view of the Channel as ferries made their way to the Continent.

Dover Castle and the White Cliffs also shimmered in the sunshine.

The sights between each town were just as impressive. Acres of green fields stretched out into the distance, dissected by snaking motorways and major roads.

Luxury mansions and manor houses - seemingly inaccessible by road - also peppered the rolling countryside.

Intermittent cloud cover plunged swathes of the county into darkness, while dozens of rays of sunlight fought their way through the darkness, shining dots of light on the ground below.

Such overpowering sights block out the constant whirr of the helicopter blades.

The tour was by AV8 Helicopters, based at Rochester Airport, and cost £150 per person.

Describing its Hellfire Tour, an AV8

spokesman said: "We invite you to experience the sights that gave Hellfire Corner its name. Take off from Rochester Airport and fly along the famous White Cliffs of Dover.

"You can see the gun emplacements, shell holes and fly over historic Dover Castle. We progress along the coast to Folkestone where the Battle of Britain Memorial stands out at Capel-Le-Ferne and you get an idea what RAF and Luftwaffe Pilots must have felt in their Spitfires and ME109's as they battled for supremacy during the Battle of Britain.

"We take in Hawkinge, a World War II fighter airfield, before turning in-land passing over many other historical sites on the way to view the home of Winston Churchill at Chartwell, then return along the North Kent coast passing the majestic Canterbury Cathedral and return to Rochester."

For more information visit www.av8helicopters.co.uk or call 01634 672288.

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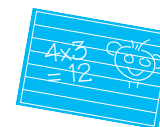
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BREAK TIME



PAMPERED: Students Holly Lyndon-Love, Dianne Learmouth and Stevie Curry throw in a shoulder and head massage for Sappers Alex Nazarus, Adam Noon and John Bowley

Snippers take their scissors to Sappers

HAIR design students were faced with a new challenge when their usual models were swapped for soldiers.

Groups of level three hair design learners from MidKent College in Oakwood Park, Maidstone, and the City Way campus, Rochester, demonstrated their barbering skills at Invicta Park Barracks in Maidstone on February 25.

The trainee hairdressers cut the hair to army regulations, and offered complimentary head and shoulder massages, with all of the profits going to the Help the Heroes charity and Cancer Research UK.

Tracy Davies, programme area leader for hair design courses at MidKent, was thrilled to see the students cutting the gents' hair: "The students have been totally focused on a hair show they are organising for early April, doing plenty of cutting and colouring for ladies, but traditional barbering like this offers an alternative challenge – particularly when the hair has to be cut to Army requirements."

Celebration engineers a young interest in science

■ BY ANNA WHITE

STUDENTS have been immersed in a week-long celebration of science and engineering as part of a nationwide scheme.

Pupils at Invicta Grammar School have been doing a range of fun and intriguing activities using science, technology and engineering from last Friday until this Friday as part of National Science and Engineering Week.

The scheme started off with the Water World activity, including a live demonstration lecture, with a Biology: Dissection session on Monday and today.

Yesterday morning there was a demonstration on the Magic of Chemistry and in the afternoon three students from University of Kent visited to present their latest findings and dispel any science myths.

The students will be able to test how high their Bouncy Custard Balls will bounce tomorrow morning, before they become forensic DNA scientists in the afternoon.

To finish off the week the pupils will take part in a University Challenge on Friday where they will have the chance to show off their knowledge and win prizes.

Invicta Grammar School is one of eight schools in the Maidstone area that is aiming to increase the number of youngsters taking up science courses and careers.

In October last year the three-year-long Growing Scientist project was launched at The Friars, after industry bosses appealed for more interest in the subjects.

Schools which have been hosting science-



HANDS ON FUN: Invicta Grammar pupils at a space camp held earlier this year as one of the many science events

related events include Maidstone Girls Grammar, Maidstone Grammar, Sutton Valence School, Maplesden Noakes School, Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park Grammar School and St Simon Stock School.

Events have included a Space Camp, where students built and tested their own flying machines, and worked in teams to construct Mars rovers, landing crafts and solar ovens.

Later this year the pupils will be visited by specialist space schools to learn about chemical rocketry, space robotics and an 'E-mission', among others.

During the second year students will be able to take part in a CSI forensics day, followed by specialist lessons including forensic chemistry and DNA profiling. Activities for the third year are still being planned.

SEND your schools news and pictures to yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk. You can also upload your video clips of schools events on to www.yourkenttv.co.uk

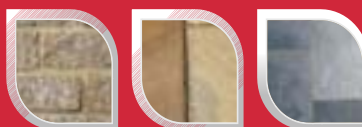
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Massive response to our campaign



A HUGE response has greeted the first week of our Buy Local Produce campaign – with suppliers, shoppers and even star names flocking to get behind it.

It seems everyone is embracing the concept of buying locally produced food and drink – and in doing so supporting the grassroots economy.

The Buy Local Produce campaign aims to support rural communities by calling on our readers to demand locally sourced and produced goods; to shop from farmers' markets and farm shops; to insist restaurants put the best in local produce on their menu.

■ BY CHRIS BRITCHER

To spearhead the campaign we have launched the website www.foodforkent.co.uk, where you can now buy all your family's food and drink needs in one place. What's more, the prices can even save you money in these tough, recession-hit times.

We've teamed up with a host of Kent's best-known suppliers of vegetables, fruit, fish, meat, breads, wine and beer to already offer an unbeatable one-stop shop of the best of the Garden of England. All of the products encapsulate what buying local means. By not being transported hundreds of miles from our farms to distribution centres around the UK



and then back down to our supermarkets, the food from www.foodforkent.co.uk is packed with freshness. What's more, aside from flavours that pack a punch and tastes which tantalise the tongue, the lack of processing and travelling means all the nutrients and goodness remain, so it's better for you too. If there are fewer food miles, then the environment also benefits.

And if Kent's economy enjoys a boom, then we're helping safeguard the businesses, jobs and traditions on which our county's heritage is built.

For now our team behind the site – who have years of experience in sourcing, delivering and maintaining relations with established, reputable local suppliers – are ensuring those who have been in touch fulfil our tough criteria of quality, health and safety; price, value, reliability of supply and, of course, ensuring the produce comes from Kent.

So why not try the site for yourself today? Filling up your online basket could not be easier. Just browse the variety of products available and with a click of the mouse you can start adding them to your order. It couldn't be simpler. Log-on today at www.foodforkent.co.uk.

The Buy Local Produce campaign is supported by Produced in Kent, the non-profit organisation backed by KCC and Hadlow College.



Basket price comparison

Sample baskets contain: Granary bread, two pints milk, 4 x 150ml yoghurts, 4 x Spitfire Beer (500ml), 500g Red Grapes, 1kg Gala apples, 1kg Conference pears, 4 x oranges, 1 x large mango, 1kg clementines, 2kg potatoes, 1kg onions, 1kg carrots, 1 x Savoy cabbage, 1 x red cabbage, 1kg broccoli, 500g purple sprouting, 1 x cauliflower, 600g chicken thighs, 500g pork sausages, 250g back bacon, 500g braising steak. Date: 24 February 2009. Source: mysupermarket.com. Closest match applied. Excludes Express and Metros. Excludes delivery charge. Red number indicates price difference.

To see this clip search for 'food' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



Go behind the scenes of foodforkent.co.uk

WE WANT you to feel completely confident using our great new service – so why not take a glimpse behind the scenes and hear directly from the people behind the www.foodforkent.co.uk site themselves?

We sent a video crew down from our sister website – the free, broadband TV www.yourkenttv.co.uk.

Presenter Julie Maddocks took to the great outdoors to meet the people behind the project, the producers delivering their goods – and the care taken in packing your goods ready to be delivered direct to your door.

• To access the clip, simply visit www.yourkenttv.co.uk and enter the word 'food' in the search bar. Then click on the clip headlined 'www.foodforkent.co.uk'.



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Your 28 page pull out starts on page 23

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yourmaidstoneblogger

Each week we get a mystery writer to air their views on living in and around Maidstone...

It's crunch time for our guilt donating on Red Nose Day

FEELING guilty is something I am very good at. In fact, it's something of a speciality subject of mine.

If I feel like any of my actions has prompted hassle for someone it gives me a pang of pain. It's really quite annoying. But also very British.

And on Friday we will all be feeling guilty for a variety of different reasons. Because Friday is Comic Relief Day.

Now, on the face of it, this should be a case of celebration. Of light-hearted fundraising which helps put a smile on our face and a glow in our heart. The reality will, for me at least, be an evening of getting emotionally scarred and made to feel as guilty as guilty can be.

I doubt I will be alone. After all, it's by mining the deep seam of our collective British guilt that ends up with the charities raising so many tens of millions of pounds.

Friday, for example, will go something like this. You will wake up and find every BBC radio

and TV show from local to national with an obligatory 'zany' section injected into it. It will be vaguely amusing on BBC One, over the top on Radio 1 and just plain unfunny by the time you've tuned in to Radio Kent.

As you stroll to work you will pass people in 'hilarious' fancy dress collecting cash in buckets. You will give money because you hope it will address your guilt for the day.

It won't. By about mid-afternoon you will think you should be doing something to help out the national effort – and so collect or just donate to an inevitable collection in the office.

By the time you get back home and put your feet up to watch the telly, Comic Relief will already be a few quid better off thanks to your generosity.

Then you'll tune into BBC One. You'll be tricked at first by watching Dr Who touch down in Albert Square or some such silliness. And you'll hover for just a few moments too long. Before you know it they'll be cutting to Billy Connolly in a poor African village. You'll think

'ah Billy Connolly, he's always funny isn't he?'. It will be a mistake. The story he will highlight will be of unbelievable deprivation and sadness. It may have an uplifting ending, but it will rip your guts out with a guilt trip which will reduce you to a blubbing mess.

You'll feel so guilty you'll start thinking how you must get the debit card out and fire up your laptop for a bit of online donating.

By the time you've seen a couple more of these films you'll be happy to donate a lung if it means these people get whatever it is to ease their suffering.

But the difference this year is a very different sort of guilt. And that is of simply not having the spare money to give a decent slice to charity. And that is a guilt which will be hard to bear.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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Write to The Editor, Yourmaidstone, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

* We cannot guarantee all articles will be published and all are at the editor's discretion

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TALK TIME

KAREN WILLIAMS

The manager of the award-winning Mulberry Tree restaurant in Boughton Monchelsea tells us why they pride themselves on using Kent produce



Tell us about the cuisine and atmosphere at the Mulberry Tree?

We serve modern, English cuisine using all local and seasonal produce on a daily changing menu. The suppliers are listed on the back of our menu, so that customers can see where the produce comes from. We have created a relaxed and informal atmosphere at the Mulberry Tree, serving excellent quality food at affordable prices.

Recently named Kent's Best Restaurant at the Taste of Kent awards, can you tell us why the judges picked you as the winner?

We pride ourselves on using as much of our produce as possible from Kent. We even have an entire cheese board made of Kentish cheeses. We believe we were picked because we are serving some of the best food in Kent, in welcoming and friendly surroundings.

How will you maintain the title?

By constantly looking at our product, never be complacent and making sure we are serving what the customer wants and evolving to suit the market.

Has the Mulberry Tree been affected by the current economic downturn?

Being such a new business it is very difficult to tell, but I am sure we are, as everyone is. We are up 20 per cent so far on this time last year and are keeping our overheads to a minimum. It is survival of the fittest, and we're doing everything to come out of the recession with a strong business.

YOUR LETTERS

Council pay cuts is a false economy

The news that Kent County Council has voted to cut the pay of its workers is hardly a surprise but it is a decision that must be condemned. Council workers have been offered just one per cent against current inflation rates of around three per cent.

In times of economic recession KCC needs to inject money into our economy not take it out. By shrinking Kent's economy more than it is already shrinking, KCC are putting others' jobs at risk. County councillors need to rethink their decision.

For your support, thank you.

It's not just me, me me in the real world

While the whole country goes to hell in a handcart, with thousands losing their jobs, savings, homes, it's sadly not surprising we still have people who think they are worth even more.

The failed banks and building societies think they are worth the bonuses that could have saved thousands of their colleagues' jobs.

And we have Stuart Jeffery in last week's letters page of Yourmaidstone pleading a special case for council workers, while many of their colleagues also face the dole! Which part of 'Depression' don't they understand?

You wouldn't want to be on a sinking ship with most of these people, as they would be trampling over everybody to escape.

The unprecedented downturn, even worse than the 30's, has taught them nothing, it's just me, me, me!

Councils don't live in the real



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world, they have the luxury of a guaranteed income set by themselves and enforced by the punishment of imprisonment.

The company I once worked for during the last recession couldn't use the law to enforce its income,

so we all took a ten per cent pay cut, which I'm sure is a similar situation for most today in the real world who've been lucky enough to keep their jobs.

Phil Granger, from West Malling, by email



New team isn't in the same class

Like many others I really dislike the new format of Meridian news.

Fred Dinage is not in the same class as Ian Axton, the same applies to the rest of the new team.

I don't want news from Southampton and areas beyond Kent, Sussex and Essex.

Please bring back the presenters that made Meridian worth watching.

Eric Vinall, from Gillingham, comment posted on web story at www.yourmedway.co.uk

Bring back the old presenters please

Meridian's new "local" news is not a patch on the old one. Could they please bring back the old team of presenters and the old region.

Until then it has to be the BBC.

Derek Chatfield, from Whitstable, comment posted on web story at www.yourmedway.co.uk

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Dumping down of BBC leaves me cold

The dumping down of the BBC has become a bit of a cliché but I really could not believe the depths of ineptitude plumbed by the weather forecast last week.

Apparently Kent was going to be hit by temperatures of minus 99 degrees centigrade – it said so on a map which the weather forecaster was using.

Granted it was a cold night but it was nothing like that.

Surely a weather expert knows that a temperature like that has never been recorded anywhere – let alone in a temperate zone such as we live in.

Who can have any faith in the BBC and what they say?

Kevin O'Connor, from Chatham, by email

Supermarkets should stump up for waste

A new report by the Local Government Association shows that supermarkets are adding to the costs of local councils through their packaging policies.

The Local Government Association wants supermarkets to pay more for processing their waste. Kent Green Party agrees, as local councils seem all to be contemplating redundancies as a result of shortages of funding.

Landfill is costing our Kent local

councils £32 per tonne of rubbish thrown away, rising to £48 per tonne in 2010.

Supermarket packaging which cannot be recycled is making a major contribution to this, according to a recent Local Government Association report.

Since local councils will spend £1.8 billion on landfill from 2008-2010, Kent Green Party supports local councils charging supermarkets more for their contributions to landfill.

We want to encourage the supermarkets to use less packaging and to make more of their packaging recyclable.

Producing less waste going to landfill will reduce costs for our cash-starved local councils.

It is a great pity that central Government is not supporting local government properly and that this is promoting redundancies in consequence. Instead the Government prefers to prop up the worst-behaved elements of our banking system.

Hazel Dawe, chair of Kent Green Party, by email

Thank you from the bottom of our heart

I am writing to thank all your readers who helped to make the British Heart Foundation (BHF) Red for Heart campaign such a success in February.

It was great to see so many people going red for National Heart Month. From wearing red to work or school,

to buying the Red for Heart pin badge, to writing a love note in their local BHF Shop or by raising funds in their own way by going red.

The money your community raised throughout the Red for Heart campaign will help save lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information.

To donate visit bhf.org.uk/red or call 0845 241 0976. Or Joanne Howe on 01474 537997 or howej@bhf.org.uk.

Joanne Howe, fundraising and volunteer manager for British Heart Foundation, by email

Go bananas and get fruity to help charity

I am writing to encourage people in Medway to take part in World Cancer Research Fund's (WCRF) 'Go Banana's on Fruity Friday' campaign.

We are calling on schools and companies to have a dress-down day, wear yellow for Fruity Friday and make a donation to WCRF. The aim is to get across the message about the importance of a healthy diet in a fun way, at the same time as raising valuable funds for our cancer prevention research and education programmes.

As well as organising fun events such as holding fruit breakfasts or fruity competitions, one way to celebrate Fruity Friday is to host your own 'Beat the Banana!' 5k fun run.

To find out more visit www.fruityfriday.org or call 020 7343 4205.

Teresa Nightingale, head of fundraising for World Cancer Research Fund, by email



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First, cut two thick slices of soft, warm bread and spread on a thin layer of butter. Always use the best quality bacon you can find – look for the Quality Standard Mark on the pack – and grill until perfectly crispy around the edges. Place the bacon on the bread but don't be tempted to reach for the ketchup or brown sauce. Instead add a generous dollop of The

English Provender Company's scrumptious Organic Sweet Tomato & Chilli Chutney. It's wonder-

fully sticky, with just the right amount of fire from plump red chillies. Our idea of perfection!

But if you like a fruitier taste, go for a spoonful or two of English Provender's Ploughman's Plum Chutney. Full of generous chunks of juicy plums, it'll get your taste buds tingling. All their chutneys are all made by experts using the finest ingredients – which is just what your bacon butty deserves.

To help you create a bacon masterpiece, English Provender is offering you the chance to win the perfect bacon butty kit, worth up to £55. The fantastic unique George Foreman 'Grill and Melt' family sized grill

which lets excess fat drip away and allows you to cook your bacon faster, plus a jar each of Organic Sweet Tomato & Chilli Chutney and Ploughman's Plum Chutney from English Provender. We have eight 'Grill and Melt' George Foreman grills plus chutney to give away.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name, address and daytime telephone number to English Provender Comp, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR. Closing date is March 16, 2009.

Question: When is Bacon Connoisseurs' Week?

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Itinerary

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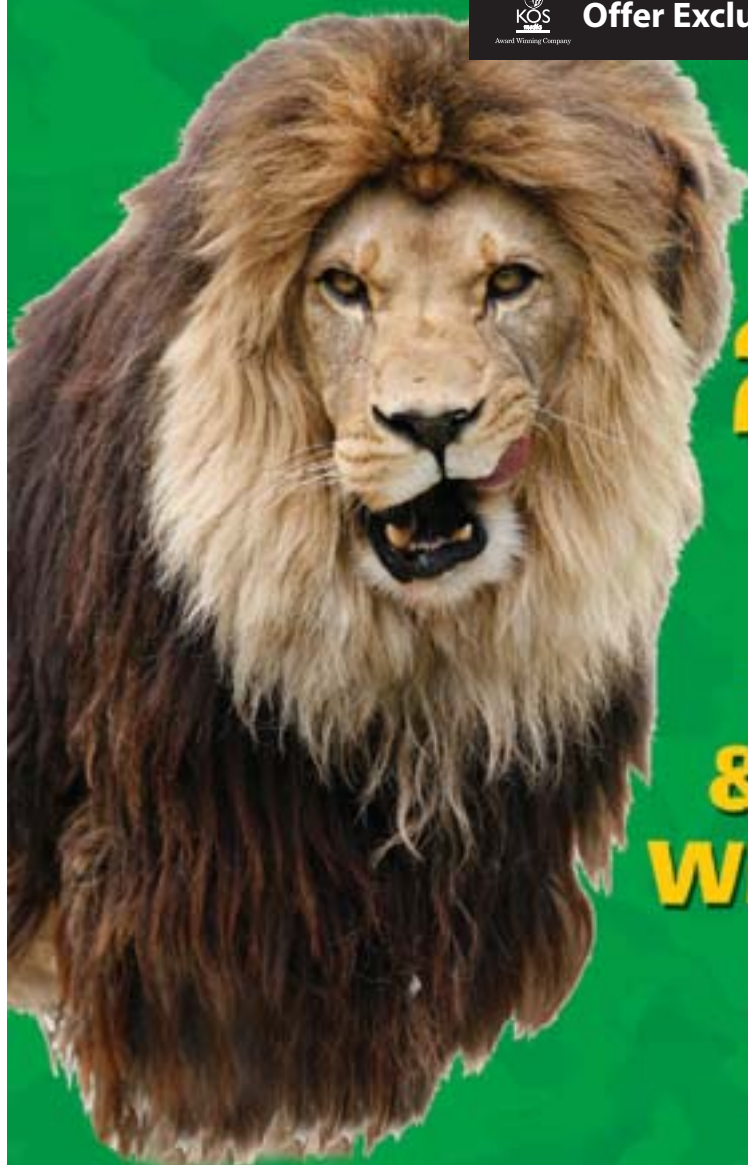
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BEAT THE CRUNCH

Money Matters Guide

Inside your pull out supplement

- 100s of money-saving ideas
- Money-off vouchers
- Discounts galore from local trades
- Look stylish and save money
- Eating out doesn't need to be expensive
- The return of the caravan holiday
- Make the most of mortgage savings
- Why going green saves business cash
- Spectacular money-off vouchers
- Drive the right car for style and savings
- Credit ideas to make money go further

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what's inside

Page 4-5

Vintage clothing is back and it saves you cash. We look at how the Credit Crunch is affecting fashion, and why many people are looking to the past for today's style

Page 6-7

Saving a few pounds here and there is easy really, your grandmother knew that. But we don't want it to make our lives austere. So, here is our Beat The Crunch fun guide to saving.

Page 8-9

About one in seven of you have switched supplier of your gas and electric in the past 12 months. But that figure should be much higher as we force suppliers to

compete. It really is easy

Page 10

If you are a saver affected by falling interest rates, our crippled banks will still sting you. Here's how to avoid it and why you should complain

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We all like eating out and as restaurants compete for our business there are bargains to be had. Here's where to look...

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How you are beating the crunch? We spoke to you to find out your top money-saving tips

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Businesses that think of the environment are actually saving themselves a pile of cash too

Page 16-17

Great food doesn't mean spending a lot and we look at

lesser-known cuts of meat that can be turned into something special

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The return of the caravan holiday. This year is a bumper year with sites recording increased bookings and a shortage of quality used caravans. But 2009 is set to be a boom year and remember, children love them

Page 19

It's not even spring time but financial experts are urging people to plan for Christmas. Yes really, we explain why

Page 20

Going to the gym can cost you £500 a year, so it's no surprise people are choosing new ways to exercise

Page 21

It may seem crazy to pay

MORE for your mortgage.

But with interest rate at an all-time low, you could make a real investment in your financial future

Page 22

Our look at the financial markets where to make a killing at this tough time, we discover, all you really need is money

Page 23

And if you don't trust the markets or banks, where should you put your hard-earned savings? Well have you thought about art or antique motorcycles? Then of course there's the old favourite: gold

Pages 24-26

Motoring guru Steve Loader takes a look at the bargains to be had at the motor dealers and offers some money-saving driving tips too

Beat the Crunch, part two. Why it can be fun as well

LAST month's Beat the Crunch Guide hit a real note with our readers as we teamed up with businesses from across the county to offer you money-saving vouchers.

The vouchers can get you a special deal on everything from storage to clothing, discounts on cars and massive discounts on home improvements.

So we've done it again for March and here's this month's guide to making your money go further.

To get your free vouchers log on to vouchersforkent.co.uk, it really is easy and has to be worth a look. Even if you are determined to save, you might just find that something you were going to buy anyway can be bought for less.

And take a little time to look through this supplement, 2009 is not all doom and gloom as thousands of people are discovering.

It really can be exciting too, and for a lot of people there are many positive changes

happening in their lives. OK, we know that jobs are under threat, but there are some families for whom redundancy may bring a change of direction for which they will look back and be grateful in future years.

Of course, for other people the crunch has made them sit up and consider where their cash really goes. Many have surprised themselves with the realisation of the wasted cash they used to let slip through their fingers on frivolous items.

Saving money can be fun. Why rush to the unpopular in-

laws for that weekend lunch? Slow down, arrive 10 minutes later and save yourself a couple of litres of fuel.

Other people have discovered for the first time the joy of local produce through farm shops and cheaper cuts of meat, which can be delicious and really take only a little more time.

If you stop spending £3 or £4 every day on a lunchtime sandwich (which is £80 a month you'll save) to make your own, ensure your home-made lunch is something you'll look forward to. Pick sandwich fillings you love, or dump sandwiches, try baguettes or a microwavable pre-prepared meal. A bit of imagination goes a long way.

Simply, we believe saving money should not be about having a less enjoyable life, you can still have holidays, still drive nice cars and still look after your home to make it our place of sanctuary.

We hope this supplement helps you take a positive view of looking after your money. Remember life goes on despite the crunch and no-one wants just to live – we should have a life.



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Essential guide to where you can save

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■ Colour Choice Conservatories in Margate is offering free colour on conservatory orders

■ Living Out Log Cabins in Chestfield and Maidstone is offering 15 per cent off plus free delivery on all DIY log cabins

■ County Garage in Herne Bay is offering 15 per cent off Ford accessories. Includes car mats, mudflaps, boot protectors, scuff plates, alloy wheels, roof bars, chrome tailpipe finisher, dog guards, roof boxes, parking sensors

■ Home Plus in Ashford and Chatham is offering £200 off when you spend over £1,000

■ FG Barnes in Maidstone is offering free six-month road fund licence with all used cars

■ Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering one free pudding with a main course purchased from the Sunday carvery

■ KOS is offering Alex classic light – one of the world's best reading lights, £84.99 save £30

■ Kentish Hardwood flooring in Rainham is offering 15 per cent off Karndean products

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■ KOS is offering a big button digital cordless phone for just £24.99 – save £20

■ Medway Stoves in Medway is offering a free companion set with any multi-fuel stove purchased

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■ County Garage in Herne Bay is offering a free winter health check and free 29-point including wash and vacuum

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering three months' free storage for a year for all new document storage clients

■ Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering one ticket get one free for music nights, meal only

■ KOS is offering all-seasons duck duvet, two duvets that button together from only £39.99, save over 50 per cent, various sizes

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Not just a pie in the sky idea

Despite the Crunch, one couple explain why they feel now is the right time to expand their food business. Sarah Jeeves and Kevin Davies spoke to reporter **Tom Betts**

ONE couple are defying the crunch by bringing a taste of London down to Thanet.

Pie'n'mash is coming to Margate's old town next month in the form of the London Pie and Mash Shop.

The shop is the joint endeavour of former south London couple Sarah Jeeves and Kevin Davies.

The shop opens on Wednesday, March 11, and will also be selling another East End favourite, jellied eels.

The pair already own the Ramsgate Cafe in Margate Road, Ramsgate, and they are sticking to the premise that quality will always out, whatever the market conditions.

Hence their decision to expand into a more niche market.

Sarah, 23, said: "We introduced pie'n'mash at the cafe and it has proved so popular that we decided to open a shop that specialises in that."

"We will also be selling healthy breakfasts and other snacks and jellied eels."

The shop's minced-beef pies are all freshly made and served with the mash and mysterious liquor that binds the dish together.

Although Sarah will not give up the secret recipe that makes up the green parsley-based liquid, she said: "It's such a key part of it and we think we make a fine liquor here."

"It is tremendously popular with customers."

Good food at affordable prices – now there's a recipe that's always going to be hard to beat.

Why this could be the time to start on your own

NOW is the right time to start your own business to secure your own future and beat the recession, according to Jake Shepherd, writes **Peter Richards**.

Mr Shepherd is managing partner in MSDC, a design consultancy, based in Gravesend.

He says the middle of a downturn was exactly when he launched his own business.

"People often find strength in the adversity of redundancy, a change in direction helps form a new beginning," said Mr Shepherd. "My agency began as a result of recession 14 years ago."

Here are his key tips to anyone considering starting up on their own:

- **Remember** that your potential customers may be disgruntled by the lack of personal service from their current large supplier who is feeling the financial pinch. As a small business you can be more competitive and provide that personal hands-on service your client needs in the current economic climate which the big companies can neglect.

- **There** are many fantastic small businesses out there, they can help provide the specialist resources you need. And you don't need to employ them, you can hire them by project or even partner with them. It will help you to specialise.

- **Think** what sets you apart – what is your unique selling point? It is unlikely that you are offering a totally unique product or service, so it could be your values, a price point, or your quality of service. It can be anything as long as it is clear and simple. I believe that this is fundamental to the success of your business idea.

- **Keep** up with your contacts and network relentlessly to meet more. This means your previous employer, your old and potential new clients. Write, email and telephone.



LOVELY LIQUOR: Sarah Jeeves outside the Pie 'n' Mash shop and, inset, dish of the day

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When you lie on a regular spring mattress, your own body weight pulls you down. The springs react by pushing back against you. The skin and blood vessels are caught in the middle, squeezed between the gravity force of your weight and the upwards force of the mattress.

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Vintage clothes and accessories

By **LAURA KATE BRADLEY**

BUYING and wearing vintage clothing is currently one of the hottest ways to recycle... and save cash.

An estimated two million tonnes of post-consumer textile waste per year are thrown away and end up in landfill sites.

Morethanwaste.com states that "...over the

full life cycle of clothing, there is a range of environmental, social and economic impacts. The growth in fast fashion and consumption is an important contributor to these impacts."

When opting for vintage you are playing an active part in reducing extreme consumption and post-consumer textile waste by recycling.

There are so many wonderful vintage clothes shops to browse, particularly in London.

However, many people don't have time to visit or simply don't have access to them.

Despite there being various online vintage stores, many are massively overpriced or describe and display items poorly.

Love Miss Daisy was launched in September 2008 with a view to providing affordable, high quality vintage clothing and accessories displayed



Lorraine says detox your wardrobe for charity



STITCH IN TIME: Lorraine Kelly is backing Cancer Research campaign for clothes donations

THE recession means more people are shopping in charity shops but fewer people are giving as they hang on to their old clothes to save cash.

Fashionistas in the south-east are planning to curb their spending to become 'recessionistas' in 2009, according to a survey by Cancer Research UK.

Nearly half (46 per cent) the people in Kent will be spending less on clothes and accessories than they did last year in an effort to beat the credit crunch.

Around a quarter (24 per cent) of people in the south-east said they would be looking for charity shop bargains, following the trend for sourcing unique, second-hand or unwanted items to keep up with the 'recessionista'

movement of fashion on a budget.

But Cancer Research bosses have admitted donations are dropping as people are more reluctant to pass on their old clothes.

Times are changing but the charity - backed by TV presenter Lorraine Kelly - has launched a 'Detox Your Wardrobe' campaign by spring cleaning their wardrobe and donating ill-fitting or unwanted items to their local Cancer Research UK shop.

The YouGov survey of more than 2,000 people revealed 77 per cent of those in the south-east admit to having clothes in their wardrobes they never wear.

However, only one in eight unwanted items are donated to

charity, according to a report from the Institute for Manufacturing at Cambridge University.

Lorraine Kelly said: "We all know that times are tough, but this is an easy way to help raise money for charity. Each bag you donate could be worth up to £30, and this will go towards helping to fund Cancer Research UK's important work. We all know someone who's had cancer so I hope everyone has a good sort through their unwanted items and takes them down to their local Cancer Research UK shop."

Bargain-hunters can also check out brand new items in Cancer Research UK shops or, if they prefer, browse online at www.shoptobeatcancer.org.



OLD STYLE: Vibrant red 1960s cocktail dress with sheer panels and sleeves; glitzy 1980s sequined butterfly belt; (above right) 1980s gold and black strappy sandals

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07/03/2009	Saturday	Fletch	Hot Jazz from the mid 20th Century	£5.00
10/03/2009	Trad Tuesday	Blue Arcadians	Traditional Jazz from the 20's and 30's	Free
12/03/2009	Thursday	Frances Knight	Smooth Jazz Trio	Free
14/03/2009	Saturday	Tiffany Wells	Cabaret Style female impersonator	£5.00
17/03/2009	Trad Tuesday	ColRose Four	Traditional Jazz from the 20's and 30's	Free
19/03/2009	Thursday	Roger Lewin & Sarah Jane	Smooth Jazz Piano and Vocals	Free
21/03/2009	Saturday	The Bearing Edge Trio		£5.00
24/03/2009	Trad Tuesday	Deco5 Allstars	Traditional Jazz from the 20's and 30's	Free
26/03/2009	Thursday	Andy MacLean	Swing Sounds from the 40s and 50s	Free
28/03/2009	Saturday	The Barretts	Django Reinhardt inspired guitar duo	£5.00
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clearly and simply, with detailed yet concise and accurate descriptions and measurements. A welcome relief for those who adore vintage but either hate or have no time for rummaging through rails, shelves and boxes full of clothing.

A real treasure chest of hand-picked vintage beauties, Love Miss Daisy sources



CLASSIC: Stunning vintage purple and gold leaf Radley evening dress circa 1980s; super chic 1980s black and tan leather jacket; and above cute 1970s mini satchel bag; far right the Love Miss Daisy Web page

from Europe, the USA and the UK. Stocking fabulous evening gowns, sassy vintage day dresses, separates, vintage coats and jackets, accessories and all things in between, the collection includes vintage wedding dresses; an ever-growing collection of beautiful, delicate one off gowns at credit-crunch beating prices.

With celebrities such as Agyness Deyn, Sienna Miller and Chloe Sevigny wowing us with their integration of vintage pieces into their headline snatching ensembles, vintage is becoming a must-have. Many wear vintage to illustrate their

own individual identities and personalities, but for those who like to incorporate vintage into their avid following of fashion, take a snoop around the seasonal section. In what has become the signature of Love Miss Daisy, each season current stock is matched to current key trends, enabling fashionistas to remain of-the-moment in an eco-chic way.

The beauty of vintage clothing is that it's built to last. Many items have already travelled thousands of miles and had several loving owners in their past. It is fascinating to wonder whose life each piece was a part of before it became a part of yours.

Many of today's fashions and designer collections are influenced by past decades and bygone eras. So, when classic and original items are still obtainable, who wouldn't want to grab themselves a piece of fashion history?

Love Miss Daisy also has birthdays, Christmas and every other occasion covered, with gift vouchers available from the value of £10. Visit: www.lovemissdaisy.com.



To see this clip, search 'crunch'

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Julie Maddocks looks at how changing your driving habits could have a big effect on your pocket at the petrol pump

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Farleys Furniture store in Ramsgate is offering 10 per cent off all lift and rise chairs and motion beds

■ Kingfisher Blinds in Ashford is offering motorised blinds for just £149 inc VAT

■ Holiday Inn Express Hotel in Ramsgate is offering rooms at £49.95 per night including bed and breakfast and free parking

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets

■ KOS is offering a set of Bypass and anvil secateurs for just £16.99 save £10

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■ GG Racing in Ashford is offering £10 off a 1/400th share

■ Cox & Son furniture and soft furnishings store in Ramsgate is offering free checks, measures and hangs on curtains

■ Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off decorative flooring

■ County Bed Company in Tonbridge is offering 10 per cent off any headboard when purchased with a bed.

■ Robins and Day Motors in Maidstone is offering free winter health checks (normal RRP £19.99)

■ Something Old Something New in Westgate-on-Sea is offering 10 per cent off when you spend over £100

■ Winter Gardens Theatre in Margate is offering discount theatre tickets

■ St Lawrence Tavern pub and restaurant in Ramsgate is offering buy one main course and get one free

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering £2 off the full ticket price for Burns night/Pink tribute night or ultimate Swing Night

■ Spand Motors in Hythe is offering a free mini valet with any full service

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Don't be bitter, there's



EVERYDAY foods can be used in a variety of ways so let's take lemons.

They can be used as a cleaner – applying lemon juice directly to deposits of hard water residue in sinks can dissolve them and make a bowl looking sparkling and new.

The juice can also be used to clean and shine brass and copper as well as making a good cleaning paste if mixed with vinegar and baking soda.

Adding the soda to half a lemon turns it into a tool to remove stains and scrub dishes clean.

Lemon juice can even be used as a polish for hardwood furniture if mixed with olive oil.

Then of course you can consume it. Cut into little chunks placed in an ice tray and filled with water it makes a perfect accompaniment to a gin and tonic.

And finally when it is about to go off – pop it into the blender along with some ice, a bit of milk and water for an excellent smoothie.

The credit crunch may be all doom and gloom – but there are still ways of raising a smile. **Nick Ames** took time to look at some light-hearted ways to beat the economic blues and have a little fun, too

MOTORING is a major cost for many people so how about some ideas to cut petrol costs.

Driving expert Tim Shallcross of the Institute of Advanced Motorists thinks that drivers can save around 40p a day by reversing into parking spaces.

He says starting a trip by reversing out of the space burns up more fuel as a cold engine requires more petrol than a warm one.

And as the reverse movement requires more manoeuvring than going straight ahead more petrol is consumed in a short period of time before the engine heats up.

Safety and saving can go hand-in-hand. Sticking to the speed limit means a saving of £12 on a 300 mile journey at 70mph rather than 80mph.

Pumped up tyres keep down wear and



tear and fuel costs and open windows on hot days are a more cost-effective measure than a fuel using air conditioning system.

Lastly – planning a route in advance to ensure no detours and off peak travel to avoid jams not only costs less – it eases frustration too.

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lots of ways to save

THE workplace can be a time you can save on costs as well as earn wages.

A thermos of tea or coffee means those expensive trips to a designer coffee shop for that vital decaf latte with cinnamon and nutmeg are a £3.50 thing of the past.

The same with sandwiches and cakes. Making them before the working day starts or the night before and you won't have to fork out for what can be an expensive snack.

Lunch times can be productive – go online and have a look for bargains and you won't be tempted to leave the office.

Flexible starting times mean beating rush hour traffic or being able to purchase off-peak rail or bus tickets.

So asking to get in an hour later and stay an extra hour can be a great benefit.



SHOPPING is also a major outlay so a bit of thought and planning can lead to substantial savings.

Picking stalks off fruit and vegetables before going to the check out can save weight – and so cut down on completely unnecessary cost.

If something is pre-bagged weigh it to make sure it's correctly priced.

Shopping around 40 minutes before a store closes will see many items reduced.

Also the need for urgency means that you won't be tempted to impulse buy as you browse around.

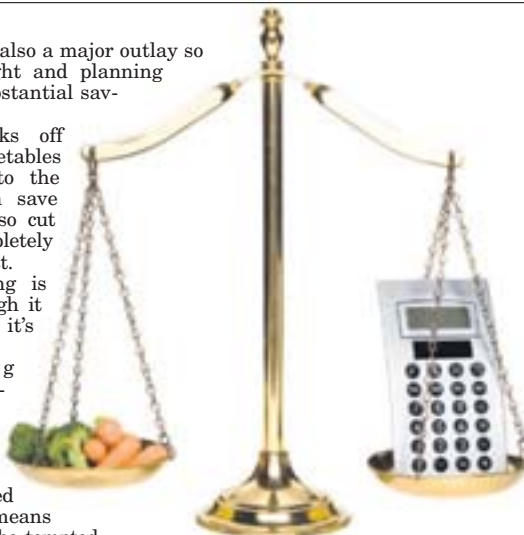
Supermarket own brand cereal tastes pretty much the same as every other.

But if you see the need to disguise your thrift just pour it all into a name brand box. It would take very refined taste buds to tell the difference.

Lastly, if you have children turn the whole shopping expedition into a Bargain Hunt style adventure.

Get the little ones to race around and discover the cheapest alternative of any particular product.

The whole thing then becomes a game – and the family is distracted from the fact that they are going to have to eat the cheapest goods in store and you come out the winner.



Essential guide to where you can save

■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering two tickets for £20 (normally £14 each) for The Jives Aces on March 20 at 7.30pm,

■ Southern Antennae aerial and satellite shop in Broadstairs is offering 20 per cent off any service it provides

■ Thanet Leisure Force in Margate and Ramsgate is offering £50 off a family membership package. Discount available against annual payment or can be used for DD memberships against joining fee and daily rate payable in advance

■ Oliver Carpets in Ramsgate and Herne Bay is offering 10 per cent off when you spend over £250

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £300 off all dining suite orders over £2000

■ GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering 10 per cent off stoves and flue systems

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra five per cent off sale prices on furniture, sofas and beds

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering free underlay upgrade on all carpets

■ Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone is offering two for one comedy nights

■ KOS is offering a pressure washer kit £99.99 incl free accessories save £116 on RRP

■ Canterbury Car Radio in Canterbury is offering 25 per cent off all prices, on all RRP prices

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Spend some energy on cost-cutting in the home

We all know that switching energy suppliers should go some way to helping you save money. So why are so few people bothering?

By **NICOLE GROSS**

AS most people receive their quarterly energy bill for the winter period, a survey of more than 6,000 Which? members, by Switch with Which?, reveals that only 15 per cent have switched energy supplier in the last 12 months.

Around three in ten of those who hadn't switched said it was because they didn't think it would save them much money, but people that changed supplier or tariff using Switch with Which? saved £257 on average – enough to pay for a romantic Valentine's break, a Which? Best Buy Sony Bravia LCD TV or 571 pints of milk!

Of those who did take the plunge, 90 per cent found it easy to do and most used a switching website. When asked why they had

changed their supplier, price topped the list.

Customers can also make savings without switching supplier, by changing to an online tariff, paying monthly by direct debit or choosing a dual fuel option, where gas and electricity is provided by the same supplier.

Alison Morrison, Switch with Which?, says: "There's no doubt that 2009 is going to be a tough financial year and we're all looking at ways to cut our spending, particularly as the winter energy bills start arriving."

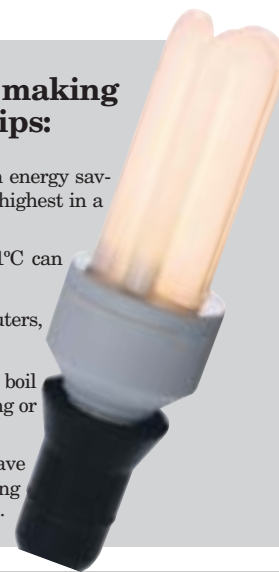
"People may be alarmed at the impact of last year's price increases and shouldn't bank on energy companies cutting their prices by as much as they increased them."

"The potential for an extra £250 in your pocket is a great incentive to change your energy provider or tariff, and help get the year off on a sound financial footing."

Customers can also save on their bills by making their homes more energy efficient, for example, energy-saving light bulbs use up to five times less power than incandescent ones.

Switch with Which? suggests making light fantastic with these top tips:

- Turn off lights when you leave a room and invest in energy saving light bulbs – the Ikea Sparsam stick scored the highest in a recent Which? test
- Lowering the temperature of your thermostat by 1°C can reduce heating bills by up to 10 per cent.
- Stop suffering from standby and turn off TVs, computers, radios and plug points when you're not using them
- Whether you're cooking or making a cup of tea, only boil as much water as you need and use the small gas ring or hob if possible
- Energy-efficient appliances are a great way to save money on bills. If you don't have an 'A' rated washing machine, try lowering the temperature of your wash.



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Take the heat out of your bills

A SLIGHT change in lifestyle choices could pay big dividends for families trying to beat the high cost of living.

Increased heating and electricity bills are two things which are combining to make spare cash an increasingly rare commodity.

At present it is people who have oil central heating which have been the worst hit – due to the massive increase in prices for oil which more than doubled this year.

A current fall in the dollar price per barrel has not been passed on to consumers by the oil companies – unlike petrol and diesel for cars.

It is homes in rural area, which use oil heating the most.

But I'd suggest caution listening to experts who say the best way to cut down on bills is either to switch to gas or electric heating.

They are set to rise as well, in the coming months, or install storage heaters which are a

By **NICK AMES**

cheaper alternative by far.

But changes to the home can be made – and these not only help save cash but are environmentally friendly as well.

- Better cavity walls and loft installation can make a major difference in costs.

- Go on your local council website and find out what grants are available.

- If you are on a low income or are a senior citizen, there's a good chance you can get some free money towards your home insulation.

- Efficient temperature controls such as thermostats are another way of preventing excess heating being generated. Older boilers can prove economically draining.

- Experts recommend replacing those devices which are more than 20 years old or any that are experiencing problems.

Savings in cost of bills will outweigh the

initial outlay according to home economic analysts.

- Old fridges and freezers should also be replaced according to the findings for the same reasons – they use far more energy than new equipment.

- Lastly homeowners should ensure that plugged-in appliances are turned off at the sockets when they are not in use and energy-saving lightbulbs are a must, they last much longer.

Free energy advice can be obtained by calling the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512012.

A home energy check which assesses heating requirements and recommends improvements in efficiency can also be done online.



GET SWITCHED ON: Efficient temperature controls (left) are a way of preventing excess heating; experts recommend replacing electrical devices more than 20 years old

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Farleys furniture store in Ramsgate is offering a free dishwasher with every kitchen order placed over £7,000

■ Kingfisher Blinds in Ashford is offering one motorised blind either vertical or roller free when you spend over £1,500

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering free accessories with all laminate flooring

■ Spand Motors in Hythe is offering a free mini valet with any full service

■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering The Riddle of the Sands March 28, 7.30pm. Two tickets for £14 (normally £12 each) quote KOS offer

■ The Captain Digby pub and restaurant in Broadstairs is offering a free kid's meal from the pirates menu with every adult meal ordered from the restaurant menu

■ Southern Antennae in Broadstairs is offering £25 off a high gain digital aerial

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering 20 per cent off in the Verve Grill or Victory Pub

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £100 off elevating TV cabinets

■ Acorns health and fitness in Chatham is offering a third off gym membership

■ KOS is offering a Pulsar Kinetic Watch only £49.99 (inc p&p) no battery required, saving over 50 per cent on RRP

■ Morris & Turner in Medway is offering an extra £10 off Taurus vanity units and basins

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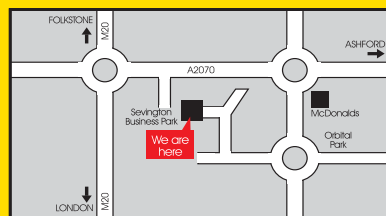
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Don't bank on getting away with an overdraft

AT a time when banks are feeling the pinch as much as anyone – if not more so – it is vital for savers to balance their books.

Those who go overdrawn need to beware as banks will be quick off the mark when it comes to charging them cash penalties which can reach as much as £40 – half of which can be charged for just writing a warning letter.

Charges have been imposed on millions of people across Britain, and in some cases they have been viewed as unfair by financial watchdogs.

And at times of economic hardship they are the last things cash-strapped consumers want to fork out for.

According to Money Expert, the penalty for exceeding an account limit has shot up some 20 per cent over the last 12 months, with the typical levy now standing at around £30 every time this happens in an account.

In such circumstances, struggling consumers may find that going overdrawn further hits their ability to meet payment responsibilities such as personal loans, credit cards or mortgage contributions.

Customers who slip into minor difficulties can see a mountain of debts pile-up, as banks charge £20 or more to send a letter and charge large amounts for going into overdrafts and missing direct debits.

The website Money Expert states that hikes in unauthorised overdraft fees – equivalent to an additional five pounds every time a limit is

BY **ANDREW JACKSON**

exceeded – come in spite of an ongoing investigation in whether such charges are in any way justified.

In a landmark case brought by the Office of Fair Trading, banks are coming under scrutiny for charging such high fees, with certain quarters claiming that they are disproportionate to the costs incurred by the bank for processing the transaction.

Commenting on the situation, Sean Gardner, director of Money Expert, said consumers may be particularly exposed to these punitive charges in the coming months.

He said: "For those people already in their overdrafts the advice is clear, keep a close tab on your outgoings."

But customers who have been charged up to £40 for unauthorised overdrafts, bounced cheques, or failed direct debits are now fighting back against the bank charges.

Banks have long been accused of ripping off customers with the high charges they impose for minor account problems.

Statistics show complaints against banks have soared, according to the Banking Code Standards Board, with most about interest rates and unfair charges.

And public anger at the bonuses given to bankers whose actions have led to the global economic meltdown have fueled the feelings of resentment.



CHARGES: Banks will be quick off the mark to send you a penalty letter for going overdrawn – it could reach up to £40

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lindsay's Driver Training in Hythe is offering a Learner Driver starter pack for only £95 which includes four lessons, theory training DVD Rom, Highway Code, Theory Q&A book, £60 pass plus discount (for under 20s) Young marmalade kit (low car insurance and cars for new drivers)

■ GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering £10 off Honda mower servicing and £20 off Honda and Husqvarna ride on mower servicing

■ Clarkes Furnishers in Maidstone is offering a free power upgrade. Pay for a manual recliner and upgrade to a power version free. G Plan upholstery

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £300 off upholstery orders over £1,500

■ The Fireplace in Sittingbourne is offering 10 per cent off

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering 50 per cent off its Sunday night pasta buffet

■ Thanet Leisure Force in Margate and Ramsgate is offering £100 off joining fee. At any Thanet leisure force fitness studio when you sign up to any membership package

■ Farleys furniture store in Ramsgate is offering half price duvets and pillows with every bed purchased

■ KOS is offering a porous seepage hose. It saves time and money uses up to 70 per cent less water. From only £19.99, save £35 on RRP

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BY NICK AMES

AS the credit crunch well and truly bites diners would probably be excused for feeling that getting a table at a restaurant should be a lot easier.

Well in some cases that's true.

In one case I know of a friend who never managed to eat at London's top tables currently rings some of those who snubbed him in mid afternoon – and asks if they have any tables available for 8pm.

"Certainly Sir," replies the obsequious Maitre de. Laughing my friend replies "Thought so" and puts the phone down.

Top restaurants across the world are all now accepting last-minute bookings which they would have sneered at a year ago.

I got a table at Balthazar in downtown New York after walking in off the street whereas two years ago I called the place up only to be told Madonna had block booked it.

But for the slightly less exclusive places it is not proving easy at all to get bums on seats.

Middle market chains, such as Pizza Express, Pizza Hut, Strada and Japanese noodle bar Wagamama are attracting thousands of customers every week with discount offers and two-for-one specials.

These deals are being downloaded from the internet by bargain-hunting diners across the country each week.

And then there are the coupons given away with newspapers, especially the Sundays who seem to have an offer a week.

Analysts say the reason that the middle market is making such an effort is that they have relatively high fixed costs and so profit margins are tight in times of plenty.

So when fewer people are opting to eat out they can see the profit-loss equation go into the red.

But chains have to be very cautious when they offer deals on meals.



CREDIT MUNCH: Middle-market chains are attracting thousands of customers every week

Bargain deals, get a pizza the action

Usually one thing which will not be any cheaper is drink. Alcohol has one of the highest mark ups of anything served in restaurants so you'll rarely see a buy one beer and get one free on offer. The odd free bottle of wine per table of four would be more likely.

But restaurants catering for families and middle income people know they have to work hard if they are to survive.

Richer people will always eat out say the

experts – and there is always going to be the demand for a Chinese or Indian takeaway right across the board.

It's the middle market which is suffering as waiting areas packed in pizza restaurants show and queues outside the high street Italian eateries demonstrate.

There are bargains out there and make sure you take a look on the restaurant chains website before you go.

To see this clip, search 'crunch'

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You don't need to go abroad on holiday. We discover what's on your doorstep that will save you money

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Holiday Inn Express in Ramsgate is offering conference room hire for £95 per day including LCD projector, flipchart, pens and one round of coffee plus free parking

■ GG Racing in Ashford is offering £40 off a 1/100th share in racing shares

■ Elephant Windows in Ramsgate is offering £100 off with any order placed over £2,000

■ A & A Gliderobes in Canterbury is offering up to £100 off

■ Kentish Hardwood in Rainham is offering 10 per cent off carpets

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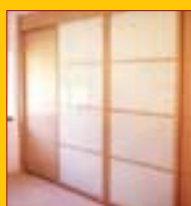
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ROBIN ADAIR FROM WILLESBOROUGH, ASHFORD, SAID:

“ I have lost a couple of window cleaning jobs in the town, like Woolworths. It's hard to know who to blame. It's all about greed. We can all cut back on things but that won't help the economy ”

DARREN GOLDER, MOBILE PHONE SHOP MANAGER IN ASHFORD, SAID:

“ I have less spending money these days and have cut back on a lot of luxuries. Our customers aren't worried about new phones at the moment; they are worried about their tariff and airtime. They want to know they are getting good value for money. ”



KIM SHEARER, FROM DOVER, SAID:

“ I haven't been spending as much as I usually would, but that's since I had a new conservatory put up in my house last year which I put on my credit card. I don't want to spend too much extra while I'm still paying for that. ”

CONAN EVERETT, 24, FROM DOVER, SAID:

“ I got made redundant back in January but I've been lucky and have got back into work already. I'm self-employed now. I think I'll be cutting back on what I spend from now on though, like not buying video games and other things that I'd usually just go out and get without thinking about. ”



JO CLARK, 24, FROM BEARSTED, MAIDSTONE, SAID:

“ To save money during the credit crunch I have started to make cut backs such as taking home-made lunch to work instead of going out to buy it, and not using my mobile phone as much. I am hoping to buy a house soon so I have even more of an incentive to save. ”

MARIA CRITTENDEN, 41, FROM BARMING, MAIDSTONE, SAID:

“ I haven't been affected by the credit crunch too much, it seems to be the people who are in debt and I'm lucky I'm not. I have cut back slightly on expensive things and gone for cheaper options when it comes to make-up, food and clothes but I think everyone has. ”



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crunch affecting you?

ANDREW RAMSBOTTOM, 32, UNEMPLOYED OF STAR HILL, ROCHESTER, SAID:



“I’m absolutely skint. I lost my job in October and have found it difficult to get work. I have to watch what I spend my money on. Luxury items such as TVs go right out the window.”

JULIA DRUMMOND-HAIG, 24, A DESIGNER OF HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER, SAID:

“The credit crunch has not affected me at all. I haven’t spent less, in fact I’ve probably spent more because everything’s much cheaper now, with the high street shops slashing their prices. I’m quite happy with the credit crunch.”



CHARLES HAGGER, 55, FROM FOLKESTONE, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR OF A MARKETING COMPANY



“We’ve certainly had the best January that I can remember, in fact we believe we will actually grow during the recession. You get your return on investments from being online, in digital marketing, so we don’t expect to do so many brochures and things like that. I haven’t personally had to make any cutbacks or change of lifestyle, I think the future’s looking bright, but ask me again in six months’ time.”

ANNALIESE BUSH, 41, FROM SMEETH WHO WORKS IN HR PORT LYMPNE WILD ANIMAL PARK SAID:

“I think I’m quite privileged as my husband works and we don’t have children living at home, so it hasn’t affected me too much. I don’t waste money but I’m not one to change my shopping habits. I always buy from the local butcher, I don’t buy packaged meat or anything like that, I do what I can and support my local farmer. I’m thinking I’ll invest in antiques as that’s the way to go, where else do you put your money?”



MAX DELLAWAY, 20, FROM MARGATE SAID:



“I think the credit crunch has affected everyone’s life. If people don’t have any money how can they spend it? My income isn’t bad at the moment but I go out less now. I used to go out a lot at weekends, but now a lot less, it’s actually quite boring.”

FRANK CALLAGHAN, 65, FROM BROADSTAIRS SAID:

“Prices have gone up and being on a pension it’s hard to make ends meet. I go without a few things, yes. Food prices have gone up, I noticed in Sainsbury’s and Tesco a cucumber is £1.28 each, and I love a cucumber sandwich. I have cut down on the thermostat and put on an extra pullover or something like that to keep warm now and things like that.”



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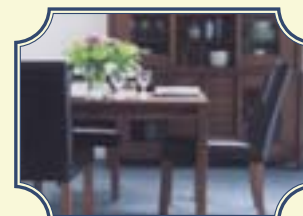
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Employing greener ways

Eco companies save money and have happier staff

If you're thinking about moving or refurbishing your office, taking an environmental approach offers real, practical business benefits – for your people, your reputation and importantly your profits.

Here are our top 10 reasons to 'go green':

1 Save money

Being a sustainable organisation can add to your bottom line. Energy saving lighting, heating and ventilation in your offices reduces energy bills. Savings go straight to your profits.

For example, a company that turns over £1 million. Saving 20 per cent on their £40,000 annual energy costs is equivalent to increasing their profit by eight per cent.

2 Cut your tax bill

Enhanced Capital Allowances scheme (ECAs) is a government plan that gives tax breaks to companies if they install certain energy efficient equipment and machinery. Put simply, you can write off the whole of the capital cost of your investment against your taxable profits.

So it's a boost to your cash flow, and your investment takes less time to pay for itself.

3 Staff save you money

Protecting our planet has become an important issue and it is likely that your staff will want to make a real difference. Encouraging it in the office can tap into that commitment within your team.

One way is to promote recycling. So if you're

By **LARA CONAWAY**

planning a move or refurbishment you could, for example, build recycling points into your design, rather than having individual rubbish bins. You'll save paper and reduce your costs.

4 Stay on the right side of legislation

The government is getting serious about going green, and new legislation is constantly coming into force. That can mean hefty fines for companies that don't comply.

Take the European Union's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)2. It was introduced in 2006 to encourage companies to reduce the environmental impact of their buildings. And in January 2009, it becomes law. So if you're planning changes in your office, thinking about the EPBD now could save the headache of financial penalties later.

5 Avoid negative press

Environmental protection organisations are taking a stand against companies they believe aren't considering their responsibilities. Greenpeace, for example, has staged protests where they've found companies using illegally sourced timber from protected forests. Save time and cash by dealing with protestors by avoiding materials which may cause protest.

6 Improve your brand

Consumers and companies are increasingly showing their environmental awareness by choosing to deal with responsible companies. So taking a green stance can give you credibility – and the edge over the competition, which should benefit your profile and profits.

7 Attract the best employees

There's a whole generation of younger work-

ers who've grown up learning about the importance of environmental issues – and it's now a key social concern. Reflecting those ideas at work can be a big attraction for potential employees.

This was shown in a recent survey by Eversheds. Two-thirds of employees said that their working environment had a significant influence on whether or not they'd accept a job.

8 It can keep your team healthy

A green workplace can help reduce absenteeism in your office. Plenty of fresh air and natural light are good starting points.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are substances that can be harmful to health. They include formaldehyde, which is in the top 10 per cent of the most hazardous substances to human health. Yet it's found all over many offices, in everything from fabric finishes and fire retardants, to gloss paints and insulation.

If you're considering a move or a refurbishment, choosing products that contain few or no VOCs can help to improve the well-being of your staff, reducing absenteeism... and making you money.

9 Retain staff and encourage loyalty

Your employees' priorities in life may not always match your own. For example, making money for you or your shareholders probably isn't top of their list. But the environment might be.

So if your team sees your company doing good work, you're more likely to have a happy, well-motivated and loyal workforce.

10 It's your chance to do the right thing

According to the Department for Trade and Industry, the built environment – including offices, shops and factories – is responsible for



GREEN SCENE: Employees said the working environment had a significant influence

47 per cent of carbon emissions.

Although it's not always easy being green, businesses have a real opportunity to be cleaner, greener, healthier. And it really can help beat the Crunch.

• *Lara Conaway is Sustainability Manager at Morgan Lovell one of the UK's leading office design, fit out, refurbishment and relocation specialist.*

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It's offally cheap and tasty

Nose-to-tail eating is set to become the big foodie trend of 2009 as people look to save money. Offal devotee and foodwriter Sophie Grigson shares her tips for eating innards, plus some tempting recipes

BY **LUCY CORRY**

LOOKED at buying steak recently? What about a nice, fat lamb chop?

If a trip to the butcher – or even the supermarket meat counter – is enough to make you feel faint, then it's time to follow the big new trend in food for 2009.

Offal – everything from oxtail and tongue to kidneys, tripe and heart – is where it's at, followed by other, lesser known cuts of meat.

Once just the preserve of food fetish clubs and wartime cookbooks, nose-to-tail eating is now heartily and hungrily endorsed by celebrity chefs such as Nigel Slater, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Gordon Ramsay.

Economic pressures combined with a growing sense of adventure in the kitchen and an awareness of offal's nutritional benefits, are now causing the rest of us to follow suit.

After noticing a 50 per cent rise in demand for cheap cuts of meat like lamb neck, Sainsbury's is doubling its range to include old favourites such as pig trotters, beef shin and lamb breast.

Product developer Georgina Stobart says these cuts are returning to supermarket shelves partly due to their reappearance on restaurant and gastropub menus.

"This year we're expecting to see a massive resurgence in nose-to-tail home cooking, as



INNARD IT LOVELY: Stuffed braised lamb's heart; and below right, fried liver, studded with sage leaves and caramelised onions, to take your tastebuds trip back a few years

people tighten their belts and look to spend more time 'comfort cooking' and preparing meals themselves," she says.

That's music to the ears of best-selling foodwriter and chef Sophie Grigson, who has loved eating some of the more unmentionable cuts of meat since she was a small child.

"The dish I remember best was sweetbreads cooked with banana and cream," she says.

"It sounds distressingly outlandish but believe me, it isn't. It is fabulously good.

"More familiar steak and kidney pie or pudding occasionally graced the table, but when time was short supper was more likely to be a plate of tender devilled lamb's kidneys, or fried liver, studded with sage leaves and caramelised onions. Tongue was another favourite, cooked, curled and pressed into shape, then sliced thickly and reheated in a sweet and sour sauce."

Sophie says oxtail stew – "so rich and irresistibly sticky and savoury" – remains one of

her all-time favourite autumn or winter meals, ladled over steaming buttery mashed potatoes.

She's keen to convert others to the cause and wants to put offal back on family menus.

"Many of us probably haven't eaten offal since we were kids but now it's truly time to get it back on our tables," she says.

"Don't be put off by your childhood memories or squeamishness and miss out!

"Offal is simple to cook and extraordinarily flavoursome, whether it's quick and delicious devilled kidneys or a homely, slow-cooked stuffed lamb's heart, there are cuts and recipes to suit all tastes."

STUFFED BRAISED LAMB'S HEART (Serves 4-6)

Preparation time: 35 minutes

Cooking time: Under 2 hours

4 prepared lambs' hearts

8 streaky bacon rashers

For the onion and mushroom stuffing:

40g/1 1/2oz butter

1 small onion, peeled and chopped

50g/2oz mushrooms, chopped

75g/3oz sausagemeat

15ml/1tbsp freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley

15ml/1tbsp freshly chopped tarragon

Salt and freshly milled black pepper

2.5ml/ 1/2tsp ground mace

1 small egg, beaten

For the braising sauce:

15ml/1tbsp olive oil

15ml/1tbsp plain flour

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and it's back on the menu

200ml/7fl oz good, hot beef stock
1 x 200g can chopped tomatoes with garlic
Dash Tabasco sauce, optional
100ml/3 1/2fl oz red wine
30ml/2tbsp freshly chopped flatleaf parsley
Preheat the oven to gas mark 4/180C/350F.
Prepare the stuffing, heat half the butter in a large non-stick pan and cook the onion and mushrooms. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in the remaining ingredients.

To make the braising sauce, heat the oil in the same frying pan, add the flour and cook for one to two minutes. Gradually add the stock, tomatoes Tabasco (if used) and wine. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat, season and simmer for five minutes. Add the parsley, cover and set aside.

Season the hearts and spoon the stuffing mixture into the cavity of each. Wrap with the bacon and secure with butcher's string. Heat the remaining butter in the same frying pan and brown the hearts on both sides. Transfer to a roasting dish.

Pour over the sauce, cover and cook for two hours, or until the hearts are tender.

Remove the butcher's string, slice and serve with creamy mash and seasonal vegetables.



Trot along for something different off the supermarket shelf

PIGS trotters have not be a feature of the restaurant menu or supermarket shelf for many years.

Nor for that matter have ox cheeks been popular for Sunday lunch?

But supermarkets are gradually reintroducing these cuts of meat to shoppers bitten by the credit crunch. And they will certainly help hungry families who need to tighten their belts.

Stewing steak costs around £4.30 per lb per shop, compared to fillet, which sells at £19 per lb. And pig's cheeks are £1.35 a lb, while pig's trotters are even cheaper at 90p a lb.

Maureen Strong, nutrition advisor for the Meat Service at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, has looked at the relative benefits to those who start to eat the cuts of meat which were once a staple of the British diet.

"There will be variation in these types of meats, depending on the cut," she said

"Trotters are not renowned for their protein content above other cuts of meats, but this will depend entirely on how it is cooked or cut in the first instance.

"The main difference which we can highlight in these types of meats will be the food quality. Try and compare a sirloin steak to a stewing steak and you'll get a similar comparison to pig's trotters and, say, bacon or pork belly.

"The former will take longer to cook and longer to chew – the very reasons these

meats went out of fashion some time ago."

JC Rook, one of the county's leading butchers, agree that the trend is towards selling some previously less fashionable meats.

Maidstone manager Stephen Abbott said: "We are selling more stewing steak – that's really noticeable.

"Recently there was a programme with Jamie Oliver talking about how to cook a shoulder of pork and that week we sold out. It's a good thing on the whole. Selling these cuts of meat means we can keep prices of other cuts down – so everyone benefits."

Dietician Amanda Ursell thinks that making these cuts of meat healthy is all about the cooking.

She said: "The good thing about old cuts of meat, like oxtail and pig's trotters is not the meat themselves – as they have considerably less protein – but the things they are cooked with.

"These types of meats are fantastic in soups, stews and casseroles to give a meaty flavour. Add beans, pulses and plenty of veg and you've got yourself a healthy dish that is great value too."

And it isn't just these blast-from-the-past cuts driving down the cost of food. According to the experts, swapping the favourable types of meats for various other cuts, already on the market, could benefit those affected by the credit crunch crisis.

"If people feel afraid to take the plunge with foods like trotters, even swapping

chicken breast or sirloin for a shoulder joint can save a family up to 40 per cent," says Richard Cullen from Research and Insight at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.

"The credit crunch has certainly created awareness for a variety of meats on the market that taste just as good – which is a good thing.

"Whether Britons will be running out to buy pig's trotters for their tea every night, I can't say, but I am sure favourable meats on the market will change."

SELL OUT: JC Rook, one of the county's leading butchers sold out of shoulder of pork after it had been featured on a Jamie Oliver (pictured) cookery programme



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Let's carry on camping

The great British holiday is having a revival thanks to the recession, so book your caravan for summer 2009

THE credit crunch is boosting stay-at-home holidays with a massive increase in bookings for caravans and camping sites.

With the Euro almost worth the same as the pound, people are swapping expensive foreign holidays for "staycations" with towed caravans or mobile homes according to travel experts.

Advance bookings for caravan and camping sites for this year are already up 40 per cent on this time last year. And sites are already recording an increased occupancy of 19 per cent – even though it is still winter.

"We confidently predict that 2009 will be the year that welcomes the return of the great British holiday," said Nick Lomas of the Caravan Club, whose membership rose by 10 per cent in 2008.

Quarterly travel and tourism figures released by the Office of National Statistics show that the number of visits abroad by UK residents was down by six per cent for the three month period during the later part of the summer of last year compared with the previous quarter – and in a recent survey by VisitBritain, the majority of those who responded said they would consider British holidays.

And statistics show that although 90 per cent of British people claim to be saving money in this tough economic climate, few plan to cut back on holidays. In light of the decrease in overseas visits, this suggests Brits are still holidaying, but without leaving the British Isles.

Caravanning is the most popular paid-for hol-



THE WAY WE WERE?: Caravan holidays are set for a dramatic 2009 comeback

(Painting Kevin Walsh, print £29.95 see www.robertopicollection.com)

iday option, with a 19 per cent share of the market – second only to staying with friends and family. Although the UK offers many different options for those wishing to holiday here, records show that in the previous 12 months, sales of caravans and camping accessories have reached levels never achieved before.

Hoseasons chief executive Richard Carrick said the UK would benefit from the projected downturn in the 2009 overseas holiday market as consumers increasingly feel the pinch.

He said: "There is broad agreement that the overall number of trips taken by Britons will not rise in 2009, but neither will it fall much.

This means that the UK is well set to benefit from the predicted reduction in overseas trips.

"People will still want to go on holiday but they are likely to take short breaks closer to home as and when they can afford it. It will be a case of 'pack up the car and go', with a continuation in the ongoing trend for very late booking."

The Caravan Club is delighted with the trend and say holidaying in this country adds a massive £180 million to local economies.

Mr Carrick added: "This is the biggest opportunity to sell Britain ever, and we believe the travel trade will increasingly see the benefits of promoting domestic holidays in 2009."

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone is offering two for one offer on music nights tickets normally £12 each, now two tickets for £12

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets

■ Deco 5, wine bar and gallery in Whitstable is offering 20 per cent off food all day Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Light tapas-style menu

■ Cox & Son, furniture and soft furnishings-store in Ramsgate is offering interest-free credit on all carpet orders over £1,000

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■ Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering 15 per cent off aerial installation

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■ Carpets 4 Less in Ashford is offering 10 per cent off carpets, rugs, vinyls, laminate and wood floors

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BY **ANDREW JACKSON**

It may not even be spring time yet but financial experts are urging people to plan for the future by saving up for Christmas.

Last year less than one in five of the people who responded to a survey by PayPoint, the UK's leading payment collection agency, made a serious effort to save for the festive season.

And one in 10 of the 1,000 respondents admitted they blew an entire month's pay and any bonuses they might have gained on gifts and partying – leaving them with nothing at all when it came to the month of January.

A total of £18 billion was spent across the UK in 2008 on Christmas presents despite the economic slump. Predictions for the coming season say this figure is likely to be exceeded.

And many families felt the pinch for a number of weeks following the festive season.

So it is probably not a surprise that more than 200,000 people have already signed up to begin saving for the holidays in nine months time with Christmas savings company Park which is a partner of PayPoint.

This figure is expected to double in the next few months according to analysts.

Peter Brooker Head of Corporate Affairs at PayPoint said: "Park helps people plan, budget and save for next year."

Savers can use PayPoint outlets to sign up for the scheme and these are located in stores such as Co-op, Spar, Costcutter, Sainsbury's Local and One Stop.

Gary Woods, Park's Managing Director, said: "Christmas is a difficult and expensive time for many, so our partnership with PayPoint will ensure that saving is really made easy with 21,000 PayPoint outlets across the UK and Ireland. On average our customers save almost £400 over the year, removing much of the worry."

"Everything is delivered in plenty of time for the festivities, giving customers time to relax and enjoy time with their families."



CHRISTMAS PREPARATION: Don't let the cost of the festive period catch you out, plan now

It's not too early to start saving for Christmas

Another suggestion is to enjoy the holiday season without all the stress and strain and budget-breaking expenses by having Christmas all year round.

Financial planners say, for example, if your son or daughter wants a new bike, don't tell him he'll have to wait for Christmas. He prob-

ably couldn't ride it then anyway.

Instead shop around for a really great buy and surprise him on May 3 and say that Christmas came early.

Spreading Christmas throughout the year is much cheaper and leaves you time to really enjoy the time off with your family.

To see this clip, search 'crunch'

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Setting up a small business? We've sought out the professionals to see if now is the right time to go it alone

Essential guide to where you can save

■ St Georges Chevrolet in Margate is offering free three years servicing extended AA roadside membership

■ Holiday Inn Express in Ramsgate is offering a room, bed and breakfast and entertainment package for £55 which includes movies, music and internet plus free parking

■ GG Racing in Ashford is offering free memorabilia – buy a share in a racehorse and receive a free mouse mat, coaster, key ring and fridge magnet worth over £10

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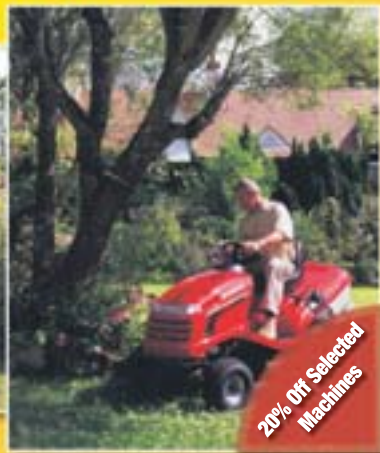
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Working out how to cut costs from home



By **TONY O'NEILL**

MORE people than ever are beating the credit crunch by keeping in shape training at home.

With gym membership costing around £500, exercising in the home is a growing trend.

Research shows that just 43 per cent pay a visit to their gym on a regular basis where as this time last year the number was 71 per cent.

Around a quarter of those staying in say they work out with their partners.

Hollywood personal trainer Cornell Chin, who has worked alongside stars such as Audrey Tatou and Leonardo Di Caprio, said home training has taken off in a big way.

He said: "The cost is of course a major implication. You do not have to fork out for a gym membership if you work out in your house.

"Then there is the convenience. No time is spent going to and from the gym, you don't need to queue for equipment and you can listen to your own CDs.

"Exercise DVDs can tell you what you need to know just as well as trainers and coaches. "Lastly if it's cold and wet outside you don't need to make the effort to go out.

"It's all there for you indoors." Although you can buy exercise equipment

for the home, the only item that is vital are dumb-bells.

Popular exercises include bodyweight work such as press-ups, pull-ups, skipping and jogging.

But specialist equipment in the home is also becoming more and more popular.

Nearly half of the people taking part in the survey said they had purchased home items.

These included treadmills, rings, exercise balls, weights and even bars.

Website www.weightlossforgood.co.uk has identified exercises for home use. On the site details of how to lose weight are shown as well as ways of strengthening muscles.

Experts add that it is a good idea to check with a health professional and ask their opinion before undertaking any exercise, especially if it has been a while since you have undertaken any fitness.

These are their hints:

- Start off gently, and work within your comfort zone

- Increase your effort gradually over several weeks

- Maintain regular breathing throughout the exercises, try not to hold your breath - your muscles need oxygen!

- Try to keep strict form with control, not using momentum.

They also emphasise not to undertake any exercise if you are in pain or feeling unwell. If you feel faint, dizzy or unwell while exercising stop.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Cox & Son furniture store in Ramsgate is offering to upgrade your carpet underlay for free, give super for standard price, and deluxe for super price

■ Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off laminates

■ Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering a free consultation on digital TV

■ Bourne Road Garage in Crayford is offering a free tank of fuel with all Mazda purchases new and used

■ Clarkes Furnishers in Maidstone is offering £50 off the sale price when you buy any stressless chair and stool

■ Stonecroft Emporium in Broadstairs is offering free glowing bunny ears free when you buy a UV Tutu skirt

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra £2 sq m off sale price of any carpet order over 15sq m, which includes underlay. Free fitting for standard rooms

■ Nasons in Canterbury is offering 10 per cent off beds and bedroom furniture

■ Old Sawmills in Ashford is offering 20 per cent off all showroom items

■ PK Commercial Tyres in Ashford and Maidstone is offering £10 off MOTs

■ KOS is offering ultra slim Danish Skagen watches only £69.99 save £20 on the RRP

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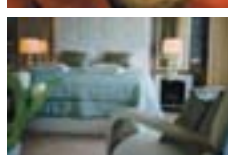
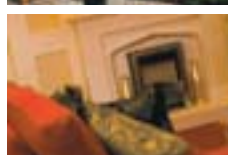
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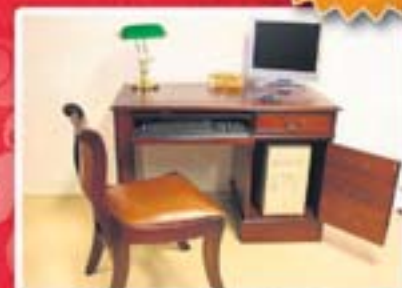


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Your mortgage could be a fast tracker to savings

By **GARY WRIGHT**

WE may be in tough times financially, but falling interest rates mean many mortgage holders have a great chance to make their lives better.

Interest rates were slashed again on March 6 to half of one percent.

So the advice is: Pay more.

Now that may seem crazy but if you have any form of tracker – the type linked to the bank base rate – or variable mortgage, you will have seen your monthly payment tumble over the past six months.

If you have a mortgage of £100,000, you are up at least £200, every month.

Now you could spend that money on some of the spectacular bargains on our high street, which is what the government wants because you'll be helping pump money into our economy, saving jobs, securing the future of Britain etc etc. However, a typical UK borrower with a 25-year £113,000 tracker mortgage in October 2008 is saving £218 a month according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders. You can add another £45 a month after the February half per cent cut.

And if you carry on paying the same amount you should be quids in. Analysts say you could knock years off your mortgage and benefit by not becoming used to spending that extra cash.



QUIDS IN: HSBC (inset) wrote to tracker mortgage customers about the benefit of overpaying; and (main) Cheltenham & Gloucester's marketing director said overpaying is a smart move

From your own point of view, you are no worse off than you were six months ago but you will help combat any loss of equity in your house and you will be reducing your interest payments and loan term in the long run.

HSBC wrote to 30,000 of its tracker and variable rate mortgage customers to explain the benefit of overpaying.

Meanwhile, Lloyds TSB reported that since November it has received more than 27,000 requests from customers wanting to set up overpayments and within days the interest rate was slashed by another half a percent.

HSBC says overpaying by £100 a month on a £150,000 mortgage at three per cent will save £11,482 in interest and shorten the term by four years and three months.

Stephen Noakes, Cheltenham & Gloucester's

marketing director, is on record saying: "For those who can spare the extra money, making overpayments is a smart move. Not only can it trim years off your mortgage but with house prices falling, overpayments will help to protect the equity in your home."

Remember interest rates will go up again some time in the future and for the thrifty who have not got used to the current low rates, they will not be hit when things do start creeping up again.

If your job is secure, getting used to low interest rates is a bad thing. When they do start going up you will have to readjust. Yet now you can help pay off your mortgage more quickly and benefit from the fact interest rates are at an all time low for any savings you might have.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ County Bed Company in Strood and Tonbridge is offering 10 per cent off any mattress when purchased with a bedstead

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra 10 per cent off sale prices of rugs, pictures, mirrors and lighting

■ Nasons in Wincheap, Canterbury, is offering 10 per cent off carpets

■ Oliver Carpets in Ramsgate and Herne Bay is offering 15 per cent off when you spend more than £600

■ Pomphreys Motors in Bapchild and Sittingbourne is offering car rental – book one day and get the second free

■ Robins and Day Motors in Canterbury is offering a free winter health check on production of KOS voucher (normal RRP £19.99)

■ Atlantis Restaurant in Ramsgate is offering 25 per cent off food from the a la carte menu

■ Ideal Home Improvements in Sheerness is offering 10 per cent off advertised rates

■ Kitchen to Table in Rochester is offering £10 off goods with an order value £50

■ KOS – Save £200 on the Toyota CB04T Mark II sewing machine only £99.99 inc p&p

■ Thorley Tavern in Broadstairs is offering a free glass of wine with The Table d hote menu Monday to Friday

■ Move it Removals in Ashford is offering £1000 cash draw when you get a quote. Plus free packing boxes and paper tape for all removals booked

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Cash is still king

Some people are looking to make money as the financial markets collapse.

Sarah Hamilton discovers how some are managing to do it with investments

IN TIMES of economic gloom most attitudes are just “ride out the storm and let things get better”.

But for a few far-sighted individuals the cash trough is a peak of opportunities to make a fortune.

Back in 1974, when the UK stock market was suffering its worst decline since 1929-31 – it was to fall 70 per cent – the investment guru of the era, Jim Slater propounded a truth that came to define the period and later became something of a cliché – “cash is king”.

His words were: “You can’t always turn shares into cash, or property into cash, or works of art into cash. But you can always turn cash into other things.”

So, at the top of any would-be rich person’s list should be the retention of a pool of cash.

This empowers investors to take advantage of an opportunity when markets over-correct and throw up bargains, as this present crisis will inevitably do. A second basic principle to accept is the spacing out of investments over time to avoid the trap of buying at the top or on a short-lived ‘bounce’.

Over the past six months investors have sought to buy into bank shares convinced that they can fall no further – only to find that they have done so dramatically.

No-one knows where the bottom will be or when it will be reached, though this has not deterred investors from losing a great deal of money on the conviction that they alone are the ones that know. So be careful.



SHARES: Opportunity to make money?

Central to UK investor concerns is a return of inflation as pressure grows on the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee to cut interest rates. Investors can take out some protection through a product that has fallen out of fashion in recent years: index-linked Government stock.

This can be bought through a stockbroker or purchased through National Savings and Investments. It is currently offering two index-linked bonds of three and five years which pay a rate of 1.35 per cent plus the Retail Prices Index rate of inflation. The RPI rate is 4.1 per cent, giving a rate of interest paid of 5.45 per cent.

As the money earned is tax free, the total for a higher rate taxpayer is equivalent to 9.08 per cent. Investors can subscribe for a maximum of £15,000 through NSI.

Property is the asset class from which investors and their advisers most recoil at

present, it’s a brave investor who looks at real estate – particularly in the USA. But there are powerful reasons for doing so.

As with the UK, ‘average’ figures are misleading as the US market covers areas of almost complete price collapses such as Detroit and areas such as up-market New York City and California, where values have held up relatively well.

Another area of investor interest at present is arable land. Values have risen in some areas of the UK by as much as 26 per cent in the past year due to the higher world prices being obtained for crops such as wheat.

This pressure is unlikely to relax any time soon. And investors who do not want to take on the responsibility of farm management can invest through a specialist fund.

Increasingly attractive are exchange traded funds consisting of precious metals and gems which are traded on the stock market and allow cheap exposure to commodities previously out of reach from ordinary income people.

Investors should also widen their choice of assets in this category to embrace exposure to the increasing green energy and renewables sectors. Those who do not have the confidence to invest in this sector directly or who wish to spread their risk can enter through funds such as the £51m Jupiter Green Investment Trust.

One thing is clear from all of this information – there are plenty of ways for forward-thinking portfolio managers to beat the credit crunch and make strong returns even in today’s uncertain times.

To see this clip, search ‘crunch’

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Recycling may not immediately spring to mind as a way to stretch your budget, but it can. Here’s how...

Essential guide to where you can save

■ County Bed Company in Strood and Tonbridge is offering a free memory foam pillow with any memory foam divan or mattress

■ Lindsay’s Driver Training in Hythe is offering for you to train to be a driving instructor with £50 off a part 1 study pack

■ Nasons in Canterbury is offering 10 per cent off tiles

■ Pomphreys in Sittingbourne is offering half-price MOT with every service

■ The Pavilion in Broadstairs is offering a buy-two-get-one free breakfast from 9.30-11.30am, on Saturday and Sunday

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Family Fun Weekend with Jousting	19 – 20 September

* Admission to the trials is free but a valid ‘Key to the Castle’ ticket is required to gain entry to the castle and attractions.

Keep up to date with events by visiting www.leeds-castle.com

Golden advice for all you savvy investors

By **NICK AMES**

WITH confidence in the stock market at a low ebb, house prices down and savings losing in value, the question for 2009 is simple: Where can money be safely kept to ensure long-term future prosperity for those with savings?

As 2009 gets under way, antiques, paintings and even postage stamps or classic motorcycles are all seen as better alternatives than stocks and shares.

Old Masters, Ming vases and penny blacks are possibly beyond the reach of most mid-range savers.

But there is one thing that is guaranteed to keep its value. Gold.

Gold bullion beat all other precious saving alternatives in 2008, the second year running and the third time since 2005.

A £1,000 investment in gold bullion on New Year's Eve last year would now be worth more than £1,427, according to BullionVault, a global gold dealer.

During the same period, the FTSE100 index of the UK's top firms has dived by almost one-third of its value - turning £1,000



PRECIOUS: Gold bullion is a safe investment

into less than £689.

Then there was residential property, which before tax, maintenance and mortgage costs has transformed every £1,000 invested into just £870, according to Nationwide figures.

In part gold's rise over the year has been largely dependent on the loss in value of sterling against the US dollar; the currency gold is priced in. In dollar terms gold rose just three per cent in 2008.

But looked at long term gold is a good bet. The FTSE has plummeted by 36 per cent since its record peak of 6930, on New Year's Eve 1999.

On the other hand, since the turn of the century, gold has risen by 246 per cent against the British pound.

BullionVault's, Adrian Ash told website thisismoney.com: "Since Gordon Brown sold half the nation's gold reserves at rock-bottom 10 years ago this May, gold bullion has been by far the best-performing asset class for British investors overall."

Analysts have stated that gold looks very attractive in 2009 - if for no other reason that the year looks bad for everything else.

Historically gold rose during the last bout of sharp deflation in the Great Depression of the 1930s when US President Franklin Roosevelt revalued gold by 60 per cent and devalued the dollar by 60 per cent. This made gold's value increase from \$22/oz to \$35/oz.

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Savers cash in accounts to reduce motoring bills

By **STEVE LOADER**

WITH savings accounts currently delivering such poor interest, many people see trading in a 'gas guzzler' for a cheaper and more economical model as a better return on their investment.

And there is some 'green' kudos to be had. The Government is using escalating road tax or VED (vehicle excise duty) to drive people into smaller and cleaner cars too.

The current scale is zero to £400/year and set to become tougher. By 2010, gas guzzling limos or 4x4s face £950 road tax in the first year, although anyone spending £50,000-100,000 on a car is unlikely to be put off by such a paltry sum.

As a result, some manufacturers have produced models that are actually exempt from VED by sneaking below the 100g/km CO2 emissions mark and into band-A.

Most manufacturers also now have an 'Eco' sub-branding for their lowest emission models. Ford, for instance, is using the ECONetic label to highlight the most environmentally-friendly versions of key models such as the tax-exempt Fiesta ECONetic – arch-rival Vauxhall uses the ecoFLEX sub-branding.

Brilliant as they are, 'eco' models often cost more since they have diesel engines and special 'green' features that do not yet deliver the economy of scale savings available to makers across the whole model range.



FORD FOCUS ECONETIC: The ultra green version of the UK's No1 seller is tempting

VAUXHALL'S ASTRA 1.7-LITRE DIESEL ECOFLEX: (Right) Capable of returning a similarly frugal consumption figure

What is more, saving road tax is not such a great incentive when many conventional super-minis sit in the lowest road tax band of £35 a year anyway; over three years with an eco model, saving £105 is irrelevant if you spend far more on buying that car in the first place and are then putting expensive diesel in the tank.

So, check out conventional equivalents of eco models and don't dismiss petrol power; that fuel is still cheaper and makes sense for lower mileage users, while emission and consumption levels are closing the gap on diesel equivalents.

Diesel engines also tend to be heavier, so you could find yourself going through tyres more quickly.

Don't ignore alternative power options either,



such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or hybrids – see our 'Diesel called into question' article.

Finally, just look again at what you have to part-exchange; you might have lost a packet in depreciation on that big 4x4, but work out what it will cost you to run it for the next three years – it might be a lot less than the cost of chopping it for a new car.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lindsay's Driver Training in Hythe is offering ADI Training course – £30 off a two-hour session

■ Lordswood Leisure Centre in Chatham is offering free function hire

■ Pomphreys Motors in Bapchild and Sittingbourne is offering half-price MOT with every service

■ Simply Sofas & Beds in Strood is offering 10 per cent off beds

■ Living Out, Log Cabins in Maidstone offers free installation on all its standard range of cabins

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering a free man and a van for clients renting storage for longer than three months

■ Baileys Nissan in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off MOTs

■ Dee's Bistro in Sandwich is offering 25 per cent off your bill on Wednesday and Thursday evenings includes drinks and "WOW" during January, February and March, 2009. Meal is from the regular menu

■ Home Plus in Ashford/Chatham is offering free bedding set with any bed or mattress

■ FG Barnes in Maidstone is offering free Diamondbrite paint and trim protection with all used cars

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GET REAL



Diesel called into question

DIESEL has become the fuel of choice recently as UK buyers seek to cut costs, but do the sums still add up?

Part of diesel's appeal was the cheapness of the fuel, greater mpg and the ability of the engines to deliver better pulling power low down in the rev range and to meet tighter emissions legislation.

However, diesel now commands an increasing premium against petrol and there are doubts whether the engines can continue to meet ever-tougher emission laws.

Meanwhile, petrol has retaliated with smaller, lighter and cleaner engines with turbocharging and even supercharging for extra flexibility, while there are other options emerging to save money and the planet:

HYBRID

Current hybrids use petrol engines in tandem with electric units and Peugeot is planning to bring a diesel version to market soon.

But two powerplants and power supplies – fuel tank plus batteries – mean extra weight, while production complexity means higher prices so buyers need to cover many miles to counter this. Motorway mpg is also hardly better than a standard car.

LPG

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) looks like an excellent alternative fuel due to lower duty and emissions, cheaper car tax and grants towards the higher cost of buying new or converting older vehicles to run on LPG.

There is also a plentiful UK LPG supply as a spin-off from natural gas and refinery production of other fuels. There are many more LPG filling points across the country too – Kent now has some 40 LPG sites – and Proton recently launched a petrol and LPG version of its GEN-2 family hatchback for the same price as the petrol-only model (£10,765).

By **STEVE LOADER**

LPG costs about half that of petrol and diesel at the pump, emits about 20 per cent less CO₂ than petrol and slightly less than diesel and fewer NO_x and particulates than diesel. However, the calorific value and consequent mpg is slightly lower than for petrol and it will cost at least £1,500 to convert an existing vehicle via an approved LPG Association operator.

ELECTRIC

Electric-powered vehicles should be cheap to run, but battery technology cannot yet guarantee ranges to satisfy would-be owners. There is the worry too that the car's emissions are being transferred from the exhaust pipe to the chimney of a fossil fuel-burning power station.

BIOFUELS

Fuel derived partly from vegetable matter appeals since plants absorb CO₂ during growth and simply release it again when burned – a virtuous circle. They currently divide broadly into biodiesel and the petrol alternative bioethanol and most road fuels sold in the UK will contain at least five per cent biofuel by next year anyway. Some specialist vehicles run on higher 'bio' concentrations, but there is concern that using arable land or forest to grow 'biofuel' plants will strain global food supplies.

HYDROGEN

Use of this abundant gas to power electrically-driven cars looks like the future. Hydrogen cars are zero emission, producing only water as a by-product, but it is proving hard to establish the cost and possible emissions side-effects of producing the hydrogen fuel. It makes no sense for conventional power generators to burn oil, coal or gas to produce this emissions-free wonder fuel.



ECONOMY: Peugeot (top) is marrying its diesel expertise with electric power to create a new generation hybrid car to attack Toyota and Honda's petrol-electric models. Could it offer the best of both worlds? Meanwhile (below) Proton offers a petrol/LPG dual-fuel GEN-2 model for the same price as a standard petrol model, saving would-be buyers £1,500-2,000



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By **STEVE LOADER**

SAVE money by downsizing and running a cheaper car and then gain even more by smarter driving and journey planning.

For a start, you can save pounds and wear and tear on the car by avoiding short journeys and perhaps get fitter too by walking or cycling; a cold engine can produce 60 per cent more pollution than a warm one and a car used for many short journeys needs extra servicing and wears its engine out faster.

More fuel is wasted and higher emissions are also generated from a cold start – traffic on UK roads contributes 26 per cent of the nation's total carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂).

However, if your car journey is a must then follow these tips from the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and RAC Foundation motoring watchdogs:

- Plan your route – forethought can save wear and tear on car and driver. Try to take the most direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. If you have to commute, think about car sharing, Park and Ride' bus schemes or other public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly to maintain efficiency and economy. Under-serviced engines reduce fuel economy by ten per cent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly, but only when maintained.

- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem), are dangerous and waste fuel. Anybody who has cycled on 'flabby' tyres knows what extra effort is involved, so check pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save money and stay legal. Try to 'feather' the throttle as you reach cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style will save fuel, but never coast in neutral or with clutch pedal depressed to save fuel – vehicle control must not be compromised.

- Accelerate briskly without racing the

Clever driving is key to cheaper motoring

engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gearchanges at modest engine speeds can cut fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with windows open also mars aerodynamics and lowers fuel economy. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and avoid heavy accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning lowers fuel economy so use the fan.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Seek out low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics) supplies locally. Consider a conversion to LPG (liquid petroleum gas), which is half the price of petrol, generates almost as much power and emits much less CO₂.



TAKE NOTE: After downsizing to frugal models like the diesel Nissan Note, look at your driving style to make yet more savings

- Use 'accelerator sense'. Do you go straight from accelerator to the brake? You save fuel if you plan ahead and, rather than have to brake as you hit traffic, gently let the speed of the vehicle bring you to a halt as you join a queue.

- Reverse in when you park. When you start off again, the engine is cold and inefficient. If you can drive away smoothly without having to reverse, you save fuel and have better visibility.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and carry more weight than is necessary?

- If you are stuck in a jam then you are doing zero mpg – turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at: www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community.



PRESSURE: Keep on top of tyre pressures to save fuel and wear and tear

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Spand Motors in Hythe is offering 10 per cent off MOTs when pre-booked

■ Simply Sofas & Beds in Strood is offering 10 per cent off sofas

■ Dartford Portable buildings in Dartford is offering up to 15 per cent off timber buildings. Finance options available on Crompton garages

■ Living Out, Log Cabins in Chestfield and Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off

■ County Garage in Heme Bay is offering a free protection pack worth up to £400. Free full tank of fuel, free Gard X Paint and interior protection, free front and rear mats

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering free used boxes for all storage customers

■ Home Plus Furniture in Ashford/Chatham is offering £75 off when you spend over £500

■ FG Barnes in Maidstone is offering a free MOT for period of ownership when done with a service

■ Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off a wedding package

■ KOS is offering Five Global knives set, scissors and block, £199.99, save £150 off RRP

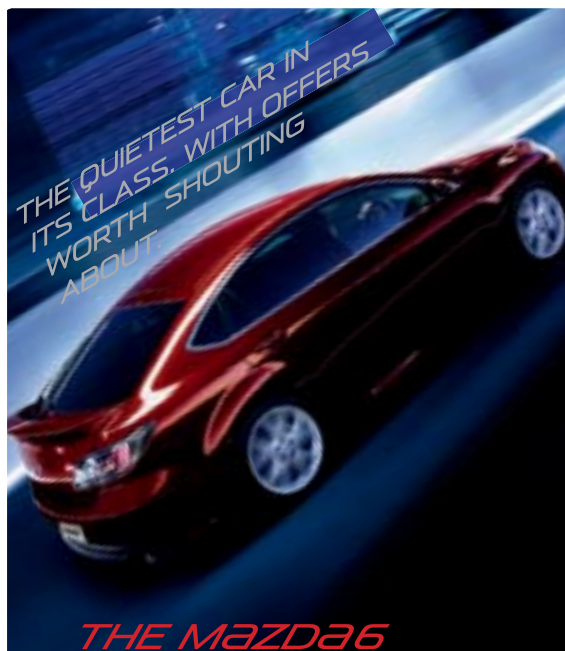
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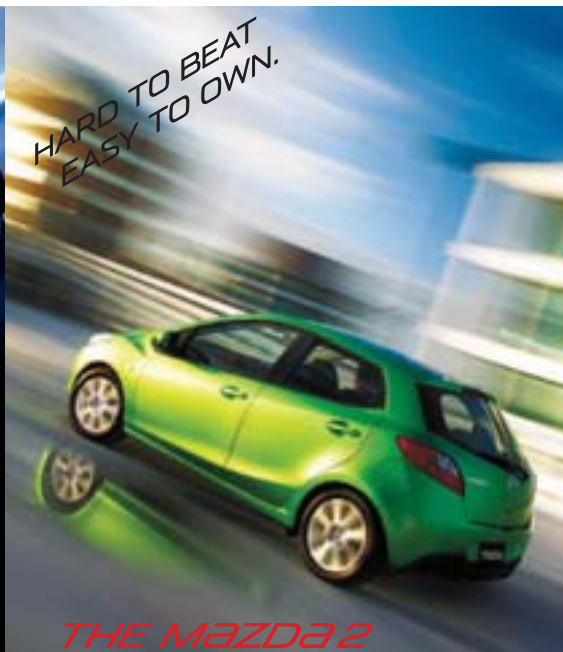


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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda range: Urban 25.2 (11.2) – 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined 34.4 (8.2) – 68.9 (4.1), CO₂ emissions (g/km) 107 – 193.

Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating dealers only on vehicles registered between 1 January 2009 and 31 March 2009. *Free Insurance available only on Mazda2 3dr models. Mazda Motor Insurance is underwritten and administered by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Plc (No. 93792). Registered in England and Wales at St. Mark's Court, Chart Way, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1XL. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Conditions apply. †4.9% finance available on Mazda Hire Purchase and Mazda Personal Contract Purchase on all Mazda2 Sport models only, all Mazda3 Models. *6.9% finance available on Mazda Hire Purchase and Mazda Personal Contract Purchase on all Mazda6 models. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantees/Indemnities may be required. Mazda Financial Services RH1 1SR. Models shown: Mazda6 2.5 5dr Sport. OTR Price £19,326 with optional metallic paint (£385) Mazda2 1.5 3dr Sport. OTR price £11,160 with optional metallic paint (£385) Mazda3 1.6 5dr Sport. OTR price £14,886 with optional mica paint (£385). On the road price includes 15% VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, 1st registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. All models now available with free 7 day drive away insurance. Details correct at time of going to print.



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MAIDSTONE SHOPPING

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GET suited and booted at Burton with 30 per cent off selected jackets.

A black slim mod fit suit jacket is £39 down from £69 and a navy herringbone stripe jacket is £49 from £69. Trousers to match are £30 each at the Week Street store.

A navy pinstripe slim fit jacket is £39 down from £100, with trousers for £40, or get a navy stripe suit jacket for £49 from £70, with trousers priced at £40.

See www.burton.co.uk.

Boost your immunity with discount vitamins

BOOTS is offering three-for-two on selected vitamins this month, covering herbal, complementary medicines and healthy digestion remedies.

Seven Seas slumber pillow pearls capsules, containing a special blend of aromatic oils to help you relax before bed, are only £4.20 for a bottle of 20.

The pharmacy chain's own brand of vitamin C and zinc tablets are £2.79 for 60, at the King Street and Fremlin Walk stores.

Super savings on food from the supermarket

HUNDREDS of great deals are available both in-store and online thanks to Sainsbury's, helping to make your shopping budget stretch that little bit further.

The supermarket's own mild smoked salmon is now half price at £4.99, with another £3 off its 240g pack of large king prawns. Butcher's Choice smoked and unsmoked thick cut back bacon is now £2.32 each with a saving of £1.17.

See www.sainsburys.co.uk or visit your local store.

Put some spring in your outfit with new range

STEP into spring with the new range at Dorothy Perkins.

Outfits that are perfect for warmer weather are available, with a cutesy yellow tunic for £25, a lilac long line shirt for £20 and a white v-neck vest for just £5.

For the cooler evenings, mid-wash skinny jeans are priced at just £28, a grey pleat shoulder cardigan is £18 and tan buckle stud belt (£10), are available at the Week Street store.

Extra money off this ghostly comedy DVD

FANS of Ricky Gervais can get his latest hit Ghost Town at WHSmith.

The film tells the story of Bertram Pincus (Gervais) who dies unexpectedly, only to be revived after seven minutes.

He wakes to discover he now has the ability to see dead people, who all want something from him.

The DVD is £12.93 instead of the RRP of £19.79 and is available at the Week Street store or online at www.whsmithentertainment.co.uk.

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PROPERTY NEWS



BURIED HER HEAD? Margaret Beckett

The system isn't HIP, it's time to cancel it

ESTATE agents have called on the Government to suspend the compulsory Home Information Pack system – saying it is “simply not working”.

The call has been made by the National Association of Estate Agents' chief executive Peter Bolton King, following the publication of the communities and local government committee's annual report.

Mr Bolton King said: “Once again a fair and rational examination of Home Information Packs has concluded that the system as it stands is simply not working.”

“Firstly the cost is punishing sellers in the pocket at a time when they really need all the help that they can.”

“More galling, they are spending this money in the knowledge that 77 per cent of buyers admit that they paid no attention to the pack whatsoever.”

“Housing minister Margaret Beckett herself admitted that HIPs are not working – but now she seems to have buried her head in the sand along with the rest of her department.”

“HIPs are confusing to customers and act as a dampener on a housing market which is essential to Britain's economic recovery.”

“With all indicators pointing to a troubled year ahead the NAEA calls on Mrs Beckett to suspend HIPs while the housing market is suffering and re-examine their viability once the market has begun to pick up.”

Since December 2007 every home put on the market, no matter what size, must have a Home Information Pack.

The pack brings together information at the start of the home-selling process – such as a sale statement, local searches and evidence of title – and was intended to save both the property buyer and seller money, time and stress.



Signs point to injection of cash to aid market

■ BY NICK AMES

THE latest figures from the Bank of England reveal that mortgage approvals fell further in January – despite moves to assist lending.

Financial experts are calling for a further injection of cash in order to boost the property market and assist in an economic recovery.

They say the measures introduced so far have proved inadequate to kick-start a major recovery.

And in the latest move the Bank of England slashed interest rates to a new low of 0.5 per cent.

Chancellor Alistair Darling justified the move by saying: “The key thing for each and every one of us is to ensure we get the economy moving to help people and to help businesses grow.”

The move came as figures were released revealing a total of 98,000 mortgages were approved in the first month of 2009, compared to 253,000 mortgage approvals in the same period 12 months ago.

Some 31,000 home purchase mortgages were approved, down 34 per cent on the figures for a year ago and remortgage approvals fell 71 per cent to 34,000.

Total mortgage lending stood at £9.1 billion – an annual fall of 64 per cent.

Jason Bolton, mortgage expert at financial website Rubii.co.uk, said: “In December we saw a mini spike and people were immediately talking about a recovery – I think these latest figures show that talk of a recovery was a little premature.”

“Even though levels of interest among buyers have improved noticeably since the turn of the year, lending conditions are still extremely testing and are likely to remain so for the rest of 2009.”



HEADING FOR BETTER TIMES? Even though levels of interest among buyers have improved noticeably since the turn of the year, lending conditions are still extremely testing and likely to remain so for the rest of this year

He explained interest rate cuts had yet to have a full effect and the only buyers taking advantage of house price falls are those with cash already behind them.

“The lack of affordable mortgage deals will continue to frustrate buyers hoping to benefit from a property market that has dropped significantly in the last 12 months,” he said.

Simon Rubinsohn, chief economist at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, said the figures show more cash must be put

into the market.

He said “Despite three consecutive monthly increases in the RICS ‘buyer enquiries’ series, the actual level of new mortgage approvals continues to languish.”

“Announcements by both Northern Rock and RBS indicate that a little more funding will flow into the mortgage market over the coming months but as things stand, this will only boost the available finance in the region of ten per cent compared with 2008.”

Is Darling set to change stamp duty plans?

CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer Alistair Darling's budget next month looks set to provide a stamp duty cut for some bulk property investors.

Experts say he is predicted to change how stamp duty is calculated so investors buying a large number of properties will only pay stamp duty on each property and not on the total investment.

Currently an investor buying ten flats worth £150,000 each would pay stamp duty of four per cent on the total bill of £1.5 million.

But under the new ruling each home would be taken individually and as the stamp duty

only comes into force on properties worth £175,000 no duty would need to be paid.

So an investor buying a large number of properties under this value would not be taxed.

The reasoning behind the move is that it is hoped the change will encourage larger institutional investors to turn to property – and in particular those taking much longer-term investments and willing to receive lower yields than traditional investors.

Such long-term investors would also be hoped to provide stability to the market and a much needed investment during the property

market collapse.

Peter Cosmetatos, finance director for the British Property Federation, said the current stamp duty rules “seriously deter investment buyers from bulk buying, which seems wrong in policy terms”.

He added: “Buying multiple units to be managed together is efficient and rational in commercial terms, but the current rules make it more expensive in tax terms.”

“The stamp duty rules should encourage efficiencies of scale in residential investment and support more efficient and professional management of rented residential property.”

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MAIDSTONE £120,000

A two bedroom modern ground floor apartment with ensuite shower room to the master bedroom. There is a fitted kitchen with appliances open plan to the 14' living room, double glazed.

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An improved 1930's style semi adjacent to Mote Park and half a mile from Maidstone town centre. This home benefits from a re-fitted kitchen and bathroom.

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £175,000

A split level three bedroom detached home with a modern fitted 25' kitchen diner. There is a living room, a modern bathroom suite and gas central heating and double glazing.

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MAIDSTONE £152,500

A modernised two bedroom end of terrace conveniently located for town and junction 5 of the M20. This property benefits from a re-fitted kitchen & bathroom, and is double glazed and had gas central heating.

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £2,000,000

A charming Grade II Listed and lovingly renovated house within the Loose Valley conservation area. The property stands within its own tranquil grounds of over four acres.

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MAIDSTONE £379,950

A detached home with four double bedrooms. The property has a stunning be-spoke kitchen which is open plan to the dining room together with a living room and a double glazed conservatory.

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MAIDSTONE £109,995

A one bedroom ground floor retirement apartment in the heart of Maidstone town centre. This McCarthy and Stone development benefits from a full time resident manager.

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £175,000

A first floor two bedroom apartment which was a show home for the development. This home has two double bedrooms (one ensuite) an 18' living room with doors to the balcony.

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MAIDSTONE £199,950

This well presented 3 bed modern family home offers spacious accommodation over three floors. There are two reception rooms, cloakroom, kitchen breakfast room and master en-suite.

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WEST MALLING £299,995

A Converted two bedroom single roundel oast with a rear garden, potential scope to install a second floor within the roundel to create an additional bedroom subject to planning permission.

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LARKFIELD £209,950

An older style four bedroom end of terrace home with kitchen, dining room with open fire and separate double aspect lounge. Other benefits include central heating, double glazing, garden.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE £135,000

A two bedroom terraced cottage with approximately 60' rear garden backing onto farmland with its mainline station and local amenities and approximately two miles from town.

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MAIDSTONE ASKING PRICE £219,950

A three bedroom three storey home with two shower rooms and one family bathroom. This home is located in a small cul-de-sac just off Union Street in the heart of town.

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MAIDSTONE £145,000

An end of terraced house with three bedrooms all with fitted wardrobes, double glazing, central heating, kitchen/dining room. Other benefits include a southerly aspect garden.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE OIEO £159,995

A three bedroom family home with central heating and double glazing. Other benefits include a double glazed conservatory. There is no stamp duty payable on this property.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE £135,000

A three bedroom semi detached home with double glazing and gas central heating. There is a lounge and separate dining room together with off road parking and no chain.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE ASKING PRICE £455,000

A detached Victorian home improved by its current owners. The property benefits from many original features, a contemporary kitchen and a Victorian style family bathroom.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



LARKFIELD £395,000

The accommodation includes a master en-suite/shower room and dressing area and three further double bedrooms, four reception areas, kitchen and utility area.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE £111,500

A well presented one bedroom first floor apartment close to town centre and with secure entry system and parking. There is a living room, double bedroom.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE OIEO £275,000

A semi detached home offering spacious and adaptable accommodation including a ground floor annex which comprises of a bedroom, shower room and living room.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE £119,950

PROPERTY ADDRESS :
98 UNION STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT
ME14 1EH We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £115,000 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891



MAIDSTONE £299,950

A five bedroom detached bungalow with two bathrooms. other benefits kitchen/dining room, living room. The front of the property is block paved and the detached garage.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

MANN Countrywide

Maidstone Office
Tel: 01622 757213
36 High Street, Maidstone,
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Grove Green Office
Tel: 01622 735513
2 The Minor Centre, Grove Green,
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Penenden Heath £485,000
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Sandling £355,000
5 bed det house with 2 bathrooms, lounge/diner, family room. Rear garden.

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Weaving £315,000
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Weaving £250,000
Two bedroom detached bungalow in cul-de-sac, conservatory, garage

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Penenden Heath £249,995
3 bed semi-det house. Kit/dining room, Cloakroom. Shower Room. ORP.

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Maidstone £249,995
Well presented 2 bed det bungalow with garden and parking for sev vehicles.

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Three bedroom semi, refitted kitchen and bathroom, double glazing, central heating

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Two bedroom semi-detached bungalow, double glazing, gas central heating,

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Vinters Park £235,000
Three bedroom detached, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating, garden

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Weaving £234,995
Two bedroom semi-detached, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating,

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Downswood OIEO £230,000
Four bedroom detached house, cloakroom, backing onto farmland, garden

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Headcorn £229,995
Two bedroom end of terrace, cloakroom, double glazing and gas central heating,

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Weaving £220,000
Three bedroom semi-detached, refitted kitchen and bathroom, double glazing

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £209,995
Link-det house corner plot, 3 beds, En-suite to master, 2 receptions, garage.

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Watlingbury £185,000
2 bed terrace with plot of land to the side offering potential development opp.

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Weaving £177,000
Three bedroom terraced house, refitted kitchen, UPVC double glazing, garage

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Downswood £164,995
Two bedroom semi-detached in sought after location, garage, no chain

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Bearsted £154,995
Sought after well presented two bedroom terrace, gas fired central heating,

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Maidstone £135,000
Terrace house, 2 beds, lounge/diner, c/heating, d/glazing, allocated parking.

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West Malling £139,950
3 bed terrace with 2 receptions, conservatory, d/glazing, c/heating, garage.

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Maidstone £99,950
3 bed end of terrace, lounge, kit/dining room, d/glazing, rear garden.

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Maidstone £67,500
2 bed apartment, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, CH, d/glazing and parking.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

142 Scotney Gardens, St. Peters Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME16 0GT.



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OIEO £120,000

River views, en suite and two double bedrooms, popular location and central position, no onward chain.

Maidstone



£134,950

Offers residents parking, communal grounds. 2 bedrooms, open plan living area, bathroom and en-suite shower room.

Maidstone



£159,995

Duplex apartment offered for sale with an onward chain, call us to arrange an internal inspection.

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£164,995

2 bedroom modern style house located at the end of a cul de sac, lounge, kitchen/diner, cloakroom and bathroom.

Maidstone



£219,995

Unusual house, unique accommodation over two storeys, each of which is split level, garage and driveway.

Maidstone



£224,995

Distinctive and unique family home, considerable accommodation with three bedrooms, family bathroom.

Bearsted



£255,000

Extended to offer lounge, dining room and third reception room, garden to front, rear & side, garage and driveway.

West Malling



£367,500

Truly unique, boasts 5 generous bedrooms, lends itself to being used as 2 interconnected dwellings with 1 as annexe.

www.bairstoweves.co.uk

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www.connells.co.uk
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Maidstone Branch



Connells

Maidstone

£114,950



- Two Bedroom
- Mid Terrace House
- Cellar, Loft Room
- NO CHAIN!!

Aylesford

£139,950



- 2 Bed Purpose Built Apartment
- Downs and River Views
- Garage, Juliette Balcony
- NO CHAIN!

Bearsted

£199,000



- 3 Bed
- Semi Detached Bungalow
- Conservatory
- Off Road Parking for 2 cars

Maidstone

£179,950



- 3 Bed End of Terrace Home
- Ensuite to master bedroom
- Downstairs Cloakroom
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

Larkfield

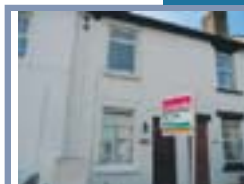
£189,950



- 3 Bedroom Semi Detached
- Off Road parking for 4 Cars
- 15'11 x 9'6 Conservatory
- Modern Kitchen

Maidstone

£134,995



- 2 bed mid terraced
- Over 3 floors, 2 double beds
- Lounge & kitchen/diner
- Double chambered cellar

Aylesford

£179,950



- 3 Bed Semi Detached Property
- Corner Plot Location
- Rear Garage, 2 Receptions
- NO CHAIN!

Maidstone

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- 1st Floor 2 bed Maisonette
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WOMEN seeking men

TAKE ME FOR WHO I AM
Hi I'm Sam, 22, looking for a relationship. I'm blonde, have brown eyes, love cosy nights in and cinema, looking to share a relationship. Box 447871

SINGLE DAD WANTED
Single mum, 23, nice and curvy, 5ft6, blonde, blue eyes, likes shopping, cinema and animals, WLTm an honest and trustworthy male, 28-38. Box 446099

BLONDE BABE LIKES FOOTIE!
Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5ft2, a woman who loves football! Loves going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man, to be her soulmate. Box 446494

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...
Socialite girl, 28, loves pubs, social drinks, meeting new people & more, seeks similar male, 58-62, for a lasting relationship. Box 446756

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HOLD MY HAND

Single mum, 28, looking for LTR. I enjoy cosy nights in, dancing, cinema. I'm 5ft1, short hair, blue eyes. Box 445363

BRING ME SUNSHINE

Outgoing, fun female 28, seeks outgoing, fun guy to make me laugh and share the good times with. Box 882511

GIVE AND TAKE IN LOVE

Loving lady female, 30, blue eyes, brown hair, seeking LTR with male 30-35, 6ft+, no baggage, in the Maidstone area. Box 448471

GET A STRIKE

African, single mum, caring, adventurous, generous, 30yrs old, medium build, I love cinema/TV, music, bowling, shopping, cosy nights in. Box 882789

LTR WANTED

Easy-going black female, 32, medium build, likes football, cooking and socialising, looking for a non-smoking, loving and caring white male, 25-48. Eastbourne Box 449294

NO TIMEWASTERS!

Easygoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTm loving, caring white male 35-47 for long term loving relationship. Box 442414

AND THE SPARKS WILL FLY

Bubbly lively lady, 5ft7, outgoing, 33, honest, reliable, looking for someone to get to know and see what happens. Sittingbourne. Box 449585

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013

LOOKING FOR A LOVING CHAP

Asford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring and loving man, I have two kids and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37yr old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my someone special. Box 446039

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Good looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, two kids. Looking for new friends and hopefully someone special. Box 446039

LOVE TO LOVE YOU

Lovely female, 36, 5ft4, medium-large build, blonde hair, blue eyes, loves house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for long-term/serious relationship. Box 341802

HISTORIC MEETING?

Mum of three, 36, long mousey hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, seeks kind, caring, genuine male 36-49, non-smoker, for LTR. Box 440693

DON'T LET ME DOWN

Pretty, black female, 38, 5ft4, like football, socialising and cooking, looking for a loving and caring male, 38-42, for a LTR. Box 446894

MEND A BROKEN HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 908053

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428668

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ANIMAL LOVER?

Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 431557

CUTE AS CAN BE

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897983

BLONDE AMBITION

Bubbly, cuddly, blonde single mum, 38, 5'6", likes cars, reading, pubs, cosy nights in, having a laugh, looking for that right male for LTR. Box 905614

A NEW FUTURE!

I'm Rachel, 35, medium, enjoys pubs, clubs, cosy nights in, cinema, theme parks, looking someone special to share things with. Box 448591

SOUND GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595

ON A ROLL!

Hi, I'm Alison, 36, 5ft5, single mum, loves swimming, roller skating and meeting new people, looking for a male for friendship, maybe leading to more. Box 448865

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Loving, caring, tactile female, 36, 5'8", blonde hair, blue eyes, NS, GSOH, likes cinema, bowling, country pubs, nights in/out, seeks male for friendship and LTR. Box 827619

YOUNG-AT-HEART

Attractive 38yr old female, dark brown hair, blue eyes, curvy physique, likes days out, music, concerts, cinema, walking, cycling, seeks loving, fun male, for friendship/relationship. Box 901893

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Seeking genuine, sincere, honest guy who likes to have fun. I'm a friendly, 40yr old female, like cats, wind surfing, railway trips, cafes. Box 449747

A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely glossy brunette, 39yr old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out, WLTm a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTm slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573

THE HOME LIFE

Happy, caring female, homely, tactile and honest. I'm black African, 41, 5ft2, medium build and would like LTR with the right person. Box 446024

LIFE IS GIVING LOVE A GUARANTEE

Down-to-earth lady, 42, a sincere, honest and reliable, looking for a male for friendship first, going out, enjoying evenings and perhaps something more later on. Box 449712

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

Single mum, 43, kind, devoted, likes walks, cinema, beaches and socialising, drinks and films, seeks similar man for lasting love. Box 449586

AIMING HIGH

6ft blonde aerobics instructor, female, 43, seeking decent, tall, fit male for companionship, hopefully leading to a relationship in my spare time (mainly afternoons). Box 446017

GOOD TIME GIRL

Outgoing young lady, 43, blonde hair blue eyes, 5ft4, works hard, loves socialising, partying, meeting new people...looking for similar male to enjoy happy times with. Box 449157

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 45-55. Box 417100

YOU DON'T KNOW UNTIL YOU CALL...

Young looking, hard working 53yr old I am a happy, caring person with a good sense of humour. Non-smoker. Heathfield. Box 883410

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY

Bubbly female, 44, brunette, N/S, medium/large build, enjoys singing and theatre. Would love to meet a decent fun-loving guy, similar age, pref non-smoker for LTR. Box 445955

BE WITH ME

Honest and caring female, 44yrs old, enjoys pubs, cinema, theatre and much more, seeks a kind, caring gentleman for friendship & romance. Box 882419

COULD IT BE YOU?

Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love nights out, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800

COME ON DOWN!

Honest, bubbly female 45, long hair, slim, enjoys walking, cinema, socialising, seeks honest, friendly chap for friendship leading to more. Box 882693

LIFE AND LAUGHTER

Young minded, sexy, slim lady. I'm fit and healthy, 45yrs old and I'm looking for a man for fun and laughter. Box 449762

HI EVERYONE, I'M

Debbie, 46, slim, 5ft5, blonde hair, blue eyes, looking for a man, 44-49, 5ft4+, with a nice appearance, preferably a N/S. Box 449422

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, young man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 444366

FANCY A FILM?

Hi, I'm Pam, 47, 5ft11, brown hair, hazel eyes, slimish, divorced, looking for a LTR with a nice and genuine man. No time-wasters please! Heathfield. Box 448626

BE MY FRIEND AND LOVER

Bubbly, caring lady, 47, divorced with 2 teenagers, dark hair, medium build, into cooking, driving, love to talk, laugh and have fun, seeking a normal guy. Box 425952

JUST IMAGINE

Petite, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things, WLTm genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562

WHERE U?

Cheerful, honest, popular blonde, 50yrs old, 5ft2, slim, looking to find an honest, loyal man. I am please call again/leave contact details. Box 887347

HERE AND NOW

Outgoing lady, 50, enjoys walks along the beach, nights out and in with a quiet bottle of wine, seeks man to love forever. Box 449524

FOR KEEPS

Hi I'm Karen, 50, medium build, 5ft, separated, devoted mum, looking for friendship with someone who likes dining out, evening walks and perhaps something lasting... Box 882618

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 45-55. Box 417100

YOU DON'T KNOW UNTIL YOU CALL...

Young looking, hard working 53yr old I am a happy, caring person with a good sense of humour. Non-smoker. Heathfield. Box 883410

FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT

Attractive lady, 63, large brown eyes, loves swimming and cycling, cinema, eating out...seeks company with a great SOH, young-minded, to enjoy anything that happens. Box 449875

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Widow, early 60s, 5ft4, dark hair, blue eyes, menage, N/S, loving, caring, no lies, enjoys travelling, socialising, eating in/out. Rye. Box 441177

FRESH AIR

Smart, attractive, bubbly blonde, 71, medium build, N/S, own house, GSOH, lives on coast, enjoys most things, WLTm smart gentleman for friendship, maybe more. Box 438147

Women seeking women

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS
I'm a 26yr old female, looking for new friends and maybe that special girl...let's have a meal and a drink and see what happens! Box 448722

FRRIENDSHIP, HOPEFULLY MORE

Feminine woman, easygoing, caring, 45, long brown hair, blue eyes. I love music, eating out, reading/writing, drives, weekends away. WLTm boyish female. Box 448248

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Slender attractive girl, 53, short dark hair, divorced, devoted mum, enjoys gardening and flower arranging, the sea, motorbikes, WLTm female who enjoys life. Box 449894

ATTRACTIVE, BUBBLY LADY

52yrs, 5ft6, blonde, size 12 enjoys good food/wine, theatre, countryside, holidays, seeking a sincere, genuine female, for friendship first, possibly relationship. Box 414143

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DO YOU HAVE THE BRAINS & THE LOOKS?

Professional, attractive female, 54, enjoys the countryside, gardening, keeping fit, reading and live music, looking to meet an attractive and intelligent man for a relationship. Box 448863

I'VE GOT THE GOLDEN TICKET

Christian female, 57, looking to meet a nice man with GSOH to go to cinema, have fun with. Box 449225

HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

Londoner new to the area, 57, 5ft5, slim attractive blonde, seeking a man for serious relationship and lasting happiness. Box 449587

WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622

HAPPY AS ME

Fun-to-be with, happy, contented lady (60), 5ft4, I enjoy theatre, dining out and having friends round for a meal, gardening, pets. Box 882812

ONLY LOVE

Classy, intelligent, happy, slim, attractive, fit and active lady, 60, GSOH, enjoys travel, gardening etc. Looking for that special friend to share life with. Box 883791

SOULMATE FOREVER

Hello, I'm 62, young and bubbly, 5ft2, shoulder-length dark hair, active, genuine, tactile, caring, loving, seeking similar happy-go-lucky male for love and romance. Tunbridge Wells. Box 449722

Quick, easy way to view a member's photo!

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FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT

Attractive lady, 63, large brown eyes, loves swimming and cycling, cinema, eating out...seeks company with a great SOH, young-minded, to enjoy anything that happens. Box 449875

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Widow, early 60s, 5ft4, dark hair, blue eyes, menage, N/S, loving, caring, no lies, enjoys travelling, socialising, eating in/out. Rye. Box 441177

FRESH AIR

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ATTRACTIVE, BUBBLY LADY

52yrs, 5ft6, blonde, size 12 enjoys good food/wine, theatre, countryside, holidays, seeking a sincere, genuine female, for friendship first, possibly relationship. Box 414143

TO LOVE SOMEBODY

Loving, tactile, genuine, considerate male, 42, life of the party, loves swimming, music, cinema, reading, WLTm the girl to spend great times with... Box 449450

LEAN ON ME

Very romantic, caring & loyal male, 44, slim, blue eyes, fair hair, GSOH, seeks lady with similar interests for hopeful long term relationship. Hastings. Box 446120

ALONG THE SHORE

Considerable, reliable guy, 44, slim, 5ft11, I like days out, the coast, nights in, pubs. WLTm kind female, 30-52, for friendship, leading to LTR. Box 448919

BABY YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR

Up-beat 45yr old lorry driver, tall and slim, likes most things in life, looking for a LTR with someone slim, honest, reliable and faithful. Box 881775

DOWN TO MARGARET!

Young-looking, slim male, 43yr old, 5ft10, enjoys beach walks and cinema, WLTm a mature lady for a committed long term relationship. Margate Box 441706

FANCY A FILM?

Shy but outgoing male, 45, 5ft8, short dark brown hair, hazel eyes, stocky, really looking for genuine, trustworthy, loyal woman for love. Box 449097

CANT SMILE WITHOUT YOU

Carpenter with own house, 47, looking for a LTR, single mothers are welcome! Loves family life, cooking and beach walks. Box 449274

SOMEONE TO SHARE WITH

Fancy a walk along the beach at sunset? A cosy night on the sofa? I'm male, 46, average build, I'm romantic and like animals and holidays. Box 447858

INTERESTED?

Hard working male, 46, smart, single, loyal, kind and caring, likes nights in and out, looking for romance or friendship first... Box 449756

IS IT ME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

Kind, genuine, down-to-earth male, 47, seeking companionship and LTR. 5ft10, cropped hair, fine eyes, stocky with cuddly belly! Box 449583

MOTORS NEWS



Zoom-Zoom all-new star is out in the open

MAZDA has unveiled its exciting MPS performance star from the all-new Mazda3 line-up.

A limited slip differential has been retained from the original, which should allow the impressive 2.3-litre turbocharged engine to apply maximum power without the front driving wheels relaying 'torque steer' to the driver's hands.

The new lighter and sleeker Mazda3 line-up also has a new fuel and emissions saving stop-start 'i-stop' system and is expected around May time.



Bargain open-top buys as recession hits hard

IF you always fancied an upmarket crop-top and have money saved, now is the time to buy, says Glass's Guide.

The trade 'bible' reveals that year-old/12,000-mile prestige convertibles are worth up to a quarter less than in March 2008, though bargain hunters must move fast ahead of an expected summer rush.

Best value is the folding hardtop Mercedes-Benz SLK 280 (pictured) and Guide spokesman Richard Crosthwaite added prestige roadster/cabriolet values used to outperform most sectors, but have been hit by decline in consumer spending.



Hyundai i-20 heating up the hatch price war

FRESH from launching the five-door i20 supermini replacement for the Getz, Hyundai has a three-door version due here in April.

Already undercutting rivals in a sector that has grown quickly as buyers race to downsize, this new i20 version will add to pressure with the usual Hyundai five-year warranty and a start price of £8,195 – £450 less than the five-door. Most buyers are expected to choose the lightweight 76bhp 1.2-litre petrol engine for its low fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.



RAISING THE BAR: Not only has the Yaris received a new look, Toyota has also implemented its new Optimal Drive technology which boosts the engine's efficiency and emissions

New-look Yaris' makeover has given it optimal appeal

TOYOTA set the bar high with the original 1999-vintage Yaris supermini.

It needed to, after earlier supermini candidates that were pretty underwhelming – remember the optimistically-named Starlet?

However, after a quantum leap with the first Yaris, the next step always risked looking conservative.

And so it seemed when the 'Mark II' launched in 2006; unique selling points were repeated – trouble-free and cheap motoring plus loads of space – but little else seemed new or exciting.

But the Mark II Yaris grows on you and looks all the better for a 2009 makeover (now from £8,585), not simply due to a fresher front and rear end either.

The big news is under the bonnet; Toyota is implementing new Optimal Drive technology widely, but progress in the supermini sector is most crucial as the recession continues.

Optimal Drive boosts combustion efficiency, while reducing friction plus engine and transmission weight to deliver better power, economy and emissions – all Yaris models now qualify for the lowest payable road tax (£35/year).

ROAD TEST TOYOTA YARIS

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

Impressively, the engine line-up also now includes a lively yet frugal new 1.33-litre petrol engine with 'Stop & Start' to cut the engine and restart it automatically at traffic lights or in stop start traffic.

Toyota claims a class-leading 55mpg average and it is typical of new generation petrol engines that are carrying the fight to diesels, which deliver less value for money in small cars due to extra weight and higher upfront cost.

The 1.33, as tested here in attractively packaged and priced SR (£10,915) form, feels fast and nimble for this class and very much a car for these times.

The rear seat can be adjusted fore and aft – a feature that made the original such a hit – to boost legroom or boot space according to immediate need, and there is plenty of room and storage flexibility in front.

The cabin can be noisy when the engine is under duress and I still don't like the Yaris's trademark centrally-mounted speedo and gauges – I think the former should be as close to straight ahead as possible – but the slick six-speed shift is mounted nice and high and Stop & Start is one of the smoothest and most inobtrusive of such systems tried so far.



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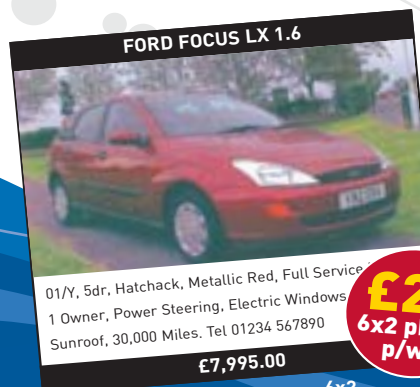
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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

AUDI TT



SEEMINGLY out of nowhere, Audi created the retro-styled TT Coupé – an instant classic evoking the lines and spirit of the great pre-war Auto Union racers. The chic retro theme continues inside the car, which is beautifully made. The original TT's only weakness was a chassis that failed to reach the high standards of contemporaries like the Porsche Boxster, but the blend of fun, style and image is hard to beat at really quite affordable prices now for most versions.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

TOYOTA CELICA



DESPITE a drippy name, the last (seventh generation) Celica – at least for now – is a class act that justifies some extra investment. It was a sophisticated drive, yet still very practical with good seating for four plus a useful rear hatchback and load area. The styling is timeless, so it doesn't matter this version was launched in 2000. Best of all, it has a range of free-revving engines, great chassis and built-in Toyota reliability – an unsung hero.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

HYUNDAI COUPÉ



ONCE Hyundai sorted out the styling and quality glitches of early generations, the Korean brand's 'reliable budget four-seat coupé' proposition was bound to take off. The latest coupé is beefier and smarter and confirms what great value the car is. The chassis cannot rival the Toyota Celica, but delivers great fun with modest outlay. For 0-60mph in 8.2 seconds, there is also the 2.7 V6 version. You may also find a car with some of Hyundai's five-year warranty still intact.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★



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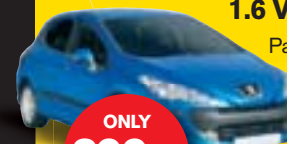
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Save **£141*** Our Price **£7,299**



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Fuji Seal Europe Ltd.

The Fuji Seal Group is the only shrink sleeve manufacturer offering a complete single source solution utilising its network of manufacturing operations in the UK, Netherlands, France, Poland, USA, Asia and Japan.

We are recruiting the following positions:

MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN

Duties will include preventative and breakdown maintenance, improvements and new installations. Individual responsibility for ensuring machines operate to appropriate quality specifications. Working an 8 hour rolling shift pattern (6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm, 10pm-6am) Monday-Friday plus callout requirement. The following qualifications are appropriate, but alternatives may be acceptable. Apprenticeship served Maintenance Electrician, City & Guilds or BTEC (ONC) in Electrical Engineering, 17th Edition Wiring regulation.

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Duties will include a wide range of tasks including planned preventative maintenance, unplanned repairs and new installations. You will work with a small team of colleagues on a continental shift pattern (2x12 hr days, 2 x 12 hr nights, 4 off). The following qualifications and experience are appropriate, but alternatives may be acceptable. Apprenticeship served, City & Guilds in Mechanical Engineering, some electrical knowledge and experience advantageous but not essential.

You'll enjoy a full range of employee benefits. To apply please send your CV to HR Department, Fuji Seal Europe Ltd, Scimitar Close, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0RJ or alternatively you can email to jobs@uk.fujiseal.com. Previous applicants need not apply.

Closing date: 9 March 2009

Strictly no agencies.

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Significant experience of working with individuals with drug related problems is desirable, along with a qualification to diploma level in a relevant area – nursing, counselling or social work for example. As for your future, there is the opportunity to make a huge impact on people's lives and help grow our services into the future working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

For further information and an application form email recruitment@kca.org.uk or write to KCA (UK), Dan House, 44 East Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AT. Alternatively, call 01795 590635. Please quote ref: 553

Closing date: 13 March 2009.

Interview date: 1 April 2009.

KCA (UK) is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from people with experience of substance use or who have had previous problems with substance misuse. Charity no: 292824.

www.kca.org.uk



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£18,000 - £22,000 Pro Rata Depending on experience

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Closing date: 26 March 2009 Interviews will be held on: 06 April 2009

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£14,000 - £16,000 Depending on experience

Closing date: 01 April 2009 Interviews will be held on: 09 April 2009

For job specification or further information please see our website
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Please send current CV and letter of motivation including where you saw the ad to
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Screen South are an equal opportunities employer and have achieved Investors in people status.



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Full Time (37 hours per week)

Salary: NJC Scale C1 Point 17 – 26 (presently £16,614 - £21,937)

We require from April 2009 a pro-active, organised and self-motivated person with a creative flair to join this popular secondary school. Operating predominantly Konica Minolta copying equipment, this role provides a support function to all levels of staff and students and requires a person with strong communication and inter-personnel skills and the ability to work with pace and diligence.

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Application form available on school website, accompanied by a CV and brief resume of relevant experience, to be sent to: Mr.S.Rayner (Finance and Business Manager) at the school address shown above. It is envisaged that interviews will take place on Monday 23rd March 2009.

Closing date: 9:00 am Wednesday 18th March 2009

The Thomas Aveling School is an Equal Opportunities Employer - committed to safeguarding the welfare of all students and any offer of employment will be subject to an enhanced CRB check.

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Closing date for application **23rd March 2009**

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Experience is preferred but not essential.

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An application pack is available from the school.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 13 March 2009
Interviews will be held week commencing Monday, 16 March 2009

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Retail Experience Essential.

Call Ben or Michele
0208 316 6842
info@davinashoes.co.uk

SUPPORT STAFF AND TEAM LEADERS

Required for our autism
specific service in
Folkestone. NVQ
qualification preferred
although not essential.

Please call Tom on
01303 251618/01303
259561 for more details.
Salary £6 + per hour.



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14-19 Programme Manager

(Full time up to £31k pa) Canterbury
The successful candidate will work closely with the management team, tutors and opera-
tional staff to ensure the design, development, management and implementation of pro-
grammes is of a consistently high standard. You would be highly skilled in developing and
maintaining effective relationships with key partners and stakeholders. We are looking for
inspirational and committed individual, who can show excellent interpersonal, communica-
tion and influencing skills. Applications are welcome from experienced candidates, and
will hold a DTLS teaching qualification (Certificate in Education or equivalent), together
with an interest in sports and fitness and curriculum development for the 14-19 age range.

How to Apply

Please contact Amac for an application form, full job description, candidate requirements,
and details of salary and benefits for position. Contact info@amactraining.co.uk or 01227
831 840. Alternatively e-mail your C.V. with a covering letter, or post it to:
Amac, 2 Denne Hill Business Centre, Womenswold, Canterbury, CT4 6HD
Closing Date: 25 March 2009 Interview Date: 31 March 2009



Career Opportunities



Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer

Canterbury College is a Further and Higher Education College in the heart of Kent. Our goal is to be
one of the best FE Colleges in England by 2010. We have 9,000 students across 300 courses and
enjoy an enviable reputation as a great place to learn. Our brand new £50M Campus is also home to
nearly 800 staff and we have some great career opportunities which may be right for you.

Section Manager Construction Craft	08/12
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum	
Section Manager Dental Nursing, Social Care and Counselling	06/110
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum	
Acting Section Manager NVQ's and Professional Studies, Dental, Nursing, Social Care and Counselling	09/02
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum. Fixed Term post ending 31 July 2009	
Temporary Section Manager Equine, Animal Care, Veterinary Services and Environmental Conservation	09/04
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum. Temporary post to cover maternity leave not to exceed 12 months.	
Temporary Section Manager Equine, Animal Care, Veterinary Services and Environmental Conservation	09/04
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum. Temporary post to cover maternity leave not to exceed 12 months.	
Lecturer Key Skills (to Automotive Engineering students)	07/30
37 hours per week, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum	
Supply Lecturer Community Development	S/CD
Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum	
Advanced Practitioner	02/128
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum	
Business Publicity Officer	09/09
18.5 hrs per week, salary starting at £16,914 pro rata per annum. One year fixed term post	
Trainer Demonstrator Sculpture/3-D Design Art & Design	09/08
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £18,963 per annum	
Trainer Demonstrator Preparation for Life & Work	06/179
37 hrs per week, 40 weeks term time, salary starting at £18,963 pro rata per annum	
Temporary Enrolment Records Assistants	TERA (1-4)
4 posts at 18.5 hrs per week, salary starting at £15,085 pro rata per annum. Temporary posts starting 01 June 09 and ending 31st October 09	
Administrator - Central Administration	07/48
27 hrs per week, salary starting at £15,085 pro rata per annum	
Learning Resources Assistant – Book Shelves	LRCA6
10 hrs per week, 38 weeks term time, salary £13,711 pro rata per annum (fixed point)	

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or
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- Generous Holiday Allowance
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- Staff Discount Scheme

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 16th March 2009 at 12 noon



CLICK
www.canterburycollege.ac.uk/job-vacancies



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Senior Practitioner Ref: CA0463

Grade: PO2 £31,348 - £40,220 per annum
Hours: 37 per week
Location: Elaine Centre, Strood, Rochester

Medway is continuing to move forward the development of its Children's Services. As part of our recent restructuring of Children's Services we have merged our Looked After Children's Team with our Leaving Care Team. We are committed to putting children at the centre of our service. We have an exciting vision for the future that will provide fully integrated services, which emphasise partnership and participation.

We're looking for talented and enthusiastic people to join our exciting journey. We can offer you an environment in which new ways of thinking and working are warmly welcomed together with the opportunity to be involved in unique and creative projects and extend your skills and interests to meet the needs of young people. You will take responsibility for a small caseload of complex cases. As well as setting the standard for colleagues to follow, you will supervise the work of other members of the team and actively coach, mentor and develop them. You can expect excellent training, career opportunities, final salary pension, generous annual leave, flexible working hours and much more.

We would preferably like you to have
• a post qualifying award • a practice teacher/assessor award
• a proven track record of developing and maintaining high standards of social work practice through supervision

For more information please call Jo Kavanagh (Team Manager) on 01634 335652
or by email joanne.kavanagh@medway.gov.uk

Any offer of appointment will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure.
All applicants must be registered, or in the process of registering with GSCC.
Closing date: 13 March 2009.

For an application pack or to apply visit www.medway.gov.uk
or phone 01634 333333 Mon to Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 1pm
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Band 6 Occupational Therapist

Our Occupational Therapy Service has a vacancy for an enthusiastic Occupational Therapist. The post would require 32 hours a week during term time with an additional six negotiated days out of term time hours.

The Royal School for Deaf Children and Westgate College for Deaf People are a specialist residential school and college for children and young people who are d/Deaf, many have additional complex needs, including learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties. We also have a Community Living provision for adults with similar conditions.

For further information or informal visit (strongly recommended) please contact Stephen Webb, Occupational Therapist at:

Royal School for Deaf Children,
Victoria Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 1NB.
Telephone: **01843 222454**.
Email swebb@royalschoolfordeaf.kent.sch.uk

Please telephone Diane Kirrage, HR
Administrator on **01843 222429**
for an application form.
Closing Date: Friday 27th March 2009

Deal Town Council

Town Hall, High Street, Deal, Kent CT14 6BB Tel No: 01304 361999

TWO VACANCIES

Deputy Premises Officer

20 hours per week worked flexibly. Salary £6.53 per hour

To appoint a Deputy Premises Officer to assist in an expanding area of work within the council. Embracing, booking and invoicing plus subsequent attendance at events, along with caretaking and the overseeing of the council's allotments. The post holder will need to be flexible as much of the work takes place in the evenings and at weekends. The successful candidate needs to be physically fit and should ideally have some relevant experience as well as being conversant with Microsoft IT packages. The council seeks to be a quality employer but parts of the Town Hall are difficult to access for the disabled.

Closing date for applications:

12 noon Friday 20 March 2009 – Interviews will be on the morning of **Friday 27 March 2009**

Deal Saturday Market Officer

Part Time post – 10 hours per week. Salary £7.34 per hour

(This involves unsocial hour working)

To appoint a Market Officer who will oversee an increasingly busy market and has to work mostly on their own initiative to agreed protocols. A flexible approach to working hours is needed as well as a patient attitude to stallholders and public. Apart from the actual market day, during the week the duties require the officer to be available via a mobile phone to deal with enquiries and stallholder bookings. Record keeping is an important part of the duties. The post holder will need to be physically fit and ideally conversant with Microsoft IT packages.

Closing date for applications:

12 noon Friday 27 March 2009 – Interviews will be on **Friday 3 April 2009**

For an application pack contact:

Deal Town Council, Deal Town Hall, High Street, Deal, Kent CT14 6BB
Tel: 01304 361999 or Email: dealtowncouncil@deal.gov.uk

Gravesend Grammar School for Girls

A Specialist Science College

Pelham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0JE
Telephone: 01474 352896 Fax: 01474 331195
Website: www.gsgs.org.uk
email: enquiries@gsgs.org.uk



TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

Maternity Cover – September 2009

We are looking for a well-qualified and enthusiastic Teacher of Mathematics to join a highly successful Faculty. The person appointed would be required to teach up to A' Level. Maths is a very popular option with students and a high proportion go on to study a Mathematical course in Higher Education.

The person appointed will receive high quality mentoring and support. The Faculty enjoys excellent facilities and equipment.

We have been a Specialist Science College since September 2004; this has led to a broad range of innovative practice across the school and we are looking to develop cross-curricular projects involving Mathematics.

The School has a high profile for achievement locally and nationally and prides itself on a strong record of internal professional development including a full induction in the Summer term.

The School is also an Investor in People and an Investor in Careers.

Application forms and further details are available from the Headteacher's Personal Assistant, Mrs M Tong Ralphs. Completed forms should be returned by post, fax or email for the attention of **Mrs E Wilson, Headteacher**, no later than

Wednesday 18th March 2009

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Assessors (Variable Hours)

Ref: S2167

Folkestone/Ashford/Dover

Closing date: 06/03/09

With campuses in Ashford, Folkestone and Dover, South Kent College offers a wide range of courses from Entry Level to Level 7 and caters for over 10,000 students of all ages. We are currently recruiting for Assessors in all vocational areas including Catering, Construction, Motor Vehicle, Engineering, Business Administration and Customer Care.

Main duties include assessing workplace students up to NVQ Level 3 and Key Skills Level 2, supporting and guiding candidates in portfolio building, 'on' and 'off-the-job' training for Work Based Training programmes, and acting as a mentor to students. You will hold a minimum of NVQ Level 3 or equivalent in your relevant specialism, and the A1 Assessor Award or equivalent (formally D32/33) as well as having a minimum of three years recent and relevant experience in your field.

For further information please contact the Human Resources Department on 0845 207 8222 (24 hour answerphone), email: humanresources@southkent.ac.uk or visit www.southkent.ac.uk. Please submit a CV in the first instance, with a covering letter detailing which specialism you are interested in applying for.

All posts are subject to a disclosure check by the Criminal Records Bureau. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all employees to share this commitment. Applications are welcome from suitably qualified candidates regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexuality or religion.

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You will need a City & Guilds 706/1 or NVQ Level 1 or equivalent plus Primary/Level 1 Food Hygiene, and should be keen to be trained to NVQ Level 2 Catering if you don't already have it. Experience of working in an industrial kitchen would be ideal, but we can train you in that too.

To apply, please email kent-sussex-area-recruitment@hmps.gsi.gov.uk or visit our website www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 27th March 2009.

Applicants will be required to declare whether they are a member of a group or organisation, which the Prison Service considers to be racist.

Part-time working or job sharing will be considered.

The Prison Service is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from candidates regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, age (subject to being within the normal retirement age for the grade), sexual orientation, disability or any other irrelevant factor.



Music/Play Worker - Disability Specialist

Pie Factory Music are seeking a creative and energetic individual with enthusiasm for a range of musical styles to work across East Kent with disabled children and young people, involving them in creating music. You will plan and deliver a wide range of music making sessions, courses and play activities for children with a range of abilities. This will include the use of specialist sound beam equipment (training provided).

You will be qualified to NVQ3 in music/youth/play work or equivalent. Previous experience with disabled children preferred.

You will need to be mobile and able to deliver sessions across East Kent. Skills in non-verbal communications systems, e.g. BSL, Makaton, PECS, etc., would be an advantage.

For more information and an application pack, please call **Steve Kreeger** on **01843 596777** or e-mail steve@piefactorymusic.com.

To find out more about Pie Factory Music, visit www.piefactorymusic.com

Closing Date: **31/03/09**

PUBLIC NOTICE

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004

APPROVED PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Applications have been made to Kent County Council to grant a renewal of an approval for the following premises to act as venues for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **Allington Castle, Castle Road, Maidstone**
Applicant: **Sir Robert Worcester**
Name of Premises: **Leeds Castle, Maidstone**
Applicant: **John Robinson**

The applications and plans of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the renewal of the grant of approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Martin Alford, Head of Registration
Regulatory Services
First Floor, Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Gnome from home left behind in Travelodge

BUSINESS travellers who have left a favourite book in a hotel if they've had an emergency change of plan will sympathise with guests who left an interesting array of goods behind in their rooms in Kent last year.

Travelodge says guests at their hotels in the county had left, not only books, but Teddy bears, a set of three World War Two medals (the customer had attended an Armistice Day ceremony), a customised bumper car kit, wigs, laptops, smart-phones and sat-navs.

Around the nation, hotel staff found a Centurion Card – aka the American Express Black Card, said to be the most exclusive charge card in the world – a life-size cardboard cutout of comedian Lenny Henry, an actual show-jumping horse, two separate sets of keys to Porsche 911s, a pet lizard called Humphrey, a living, breathing friend (left behind by “mates”), an Arsenal ticket and garden gnomes. Oh, and a 3ft pink alarm clock.

Firms sell themselves short of essential skills

ONE in five companies in the South East is experiencing a sales skills shortage, despite selling being critical in the recession, according to a new report.

The research, by sales recruitment and training specialist Pareto Law and its parent company Randstad, found a fifth of companies reported a lack of sales expertise in areas such as telephone selling, negotiation, presentation and account management skills.

Jonathan Fitchew, joint managing director, said: “Developing and training a strong sales team is critical to business success – now more than ever.”

“Companies need to invest in ensuring their sales people have the skills to quickly impact on business performance.”

“In a difficult market it's all about having the knowledge to think creatively, looking at new markets, opportunities and strategies that will help the business not only survive, but come out of the recession in a stronger position.”

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Julie Maddocks asks: Is small really beautiful in a recession? Search 'crunch'

Information is power at such a crucial time

A BLIZZARD of information is hitting companies these days, not just from news sources reporting the twists and turns of the recession but also from business organisations and local authorities, *writes Tony Patey*.

It's all worthwhile, because it helps directors and managers get a grip on the turn of events and plan strategies accordingly, but it takes time to sift through and they need to put a priority on 'need to know' information.

So today I offer a short guide on essential information on how to aim for sustainable business activity. It's high on many firms' agendas because not only does it allow them to 'do their bit' in cutting carbon footprints, it is also an effective marketing tool.

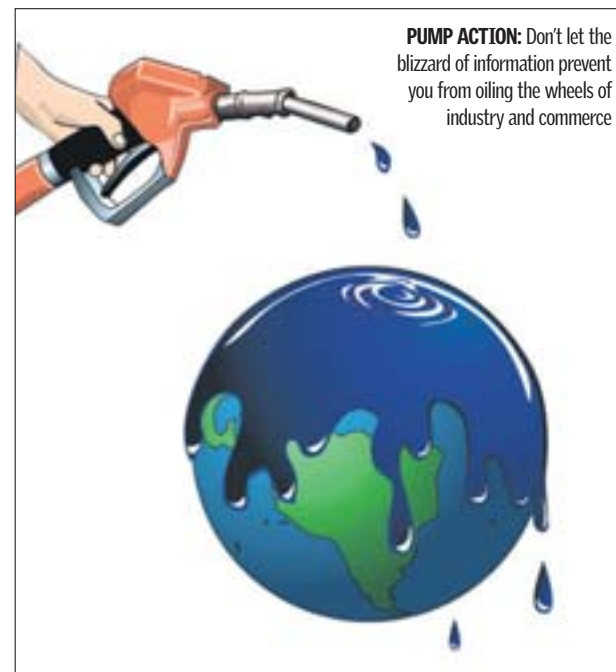
I'd like to thank Deborah Cameron, Kent branch manager of the Institute of Directors, who put it together after we spoke at a very successful breakfast meeting and seminar on sustainable business at the conference centre at Sittingbourne's Kent Science Park recently.

First stop about more information on support available from government or from private companies to cut costs, and carbon, develop green credentials or keep on top of environmental legislation is Business Link on 0845 600 9 006 or email on info@businesslinksoutheast.co.uk.

Its service is free to all small and medium sized companies, and is the contact point if you would like to receive what is called an effergy meter to help you understand and reduce energy consumption.

Environmental legislation:

- For a simple guide on what environmental legislation is relevant to your business, click on: Business Link Compliance Tool <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>
- If you want more detailed information on environmental legislation: www.netregs.co.uk
- To find out about registered waste disposal companies and licensed waste carriers: <http://ea.wastedirectory.org.uk/>
- General sustainability and carbon savings: www.businesslink.gov.uk/souteast/howtosustainable
- How sustainable is your business? Five-minute coffee break test: www.carbontrust.co.uk/solutions/CarbonFootprinting/FootprintCalculators ; www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy/takingaction/loans ; www.eca.gov.uk
- Carbon footprinting your business, loans and enhanced capital allowances: <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/solutions/CarbonFootprinting/FootprintCalculators> ; www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy/takingaction/loans ; www.eca.gov.uk
- Further support for environmental policies and environmental monitoring systems:
- Guidance on writing an environmental policy:



www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast/environmentalpolicy

- The Envirowise 'Wizard' to help you through the EMS process: <http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/Greenwash>:

- A great guide by Futerra: <http://www.futerra.co.uk>

Greenwash – a compound of green and whitewash - is a term used to describe the practice of companies putting a spin on products and policies as environmentally friendly, but they're not really.

The term was first coined by US environmentalist Jay Westerveld in an essay about the hotel industry's practice of placing green placards in each room, promoting reuse of guest-towels, ostensibly to 'save the environment'.

He found that, in most cases, the hotels made little effort at recycling because of cost-cutting.

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GOING DOWN: Maidstone ladies look set for relegation

Maidstone stunned by last-gasp winner

HOCKEY

MAIDSTONE ladies postponed their probable relegation from the Conference East but suffered a heartbreaking late defeat to St Albans on Sunday.

Heading into the game rock bottom and knowing their fate could be sealed by defeat if the sides above them won, inspired a much-improved performance and their nine-game losing streak looked to be coming to an end as they held St Albans going into the final seconds at Armstrong Road.

But with virtually the last attack of the game, Sarah Embrey netted for the visitors to earn them a 1-0 win.

Staines' defeat at Old Loughtonians gave them a reprieve for at least a week, but Maidstone must win their remaining three games, starting at Southgate this weekend, to pull off a great escape.

The club's men also tasted defeat last weekend as they lost 3-1 at Banbury. They remain eighth in the South Hockey League's Premier Division. This Saturday they host seventh-placed Teddington.

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Gills boss Mark Stimson discusses who his upcoming loan targets are



COSTLY: Maidstone (in red and white) gifted the initiative to Kent rivals Thanet Wanderers on Saturday and a slow start left them with a mountain to climb

Slow start costs Stones dear against Wanderers

RUGBY

■ BY YOURMAIDSTONE REPORTER

Thanet Wanderers 33 Maidstone 21

the opening try early on. Eldridge kicked the conversion to make it 10-0.

Maidstone had few answers until Neil Graves burst through the opposition defence in his own 22 and outpaced the covering defenders until deep in the Thanet 22. His overhead pass to Matt Iles, five metres from the line, went astray and the chance went begging.

They were left to rue the mistake when Thanet scored with their next attack as Tom Ash fed Stuart Plumridge for another try.

On 30 minutes the visitors finally got on the

scoreboard. From a five-metre scrum Tommy King looped round to touch down in the corner.

But Wanderers had the last word of the first half as Eldridge added another penalty before adding Thanet's third try himself. His conversion gave the hosts a commanding 25-5 lead at the break.

Maidstone, who have been on the end of several heavy defeats this season, might have crumbled but they emerged a different side in the second half.

A hat-trick of penalties from Craig Whitehead narrowed the gap, but just as Maidstone were beginning to gain a foothold in the game, Ash relieved the pressure with Thanet's fourth try.

Graves touched down five minutes from time, but Eldridge had the final say with a late penalty.

Maidstone host mid-table Chobham on Saturday.



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A helping hand denies Stones chance of win

FOOTBALL

BY TOM HOWARD

Maidstone United 1

Pinnock 60

Horsham 1

Seanla 69

A CONTROVERSIAL second half strike denied Maidstone United three points as their winless run was extended to ten games.

The game started slowly with both teams struggling to break each other down. It wasn't until the 23rd minute for the first chance to arrive.

Horsham broke down the right and full-back Yinka Salaam fired an ambitious effort over the crossbar.

Three minutes later Maidstone should have taken the lead through Elliott Bradbrook. Taylor Sinfield's pin-point cross found the winger in space, but his free header was comfortably saved by goalkeeper Rob Tolfrey.

The Stones upped the tempo and came within a whisker of breaking the deadlock. Jay Saunders let fly from 20 yards and was only denied by the fingertips of Tolfrey. Maidstone came even closer, when Bradbrook hit the crossbar from a corner minutes later.



Picture STEVE TERRELL

Maidstone starting XI



Subs used: Blackburn (Saunders 45), Pascal (Sinfield 66)

However, on the hour Maidstone finally found the net as Meshach Nugent's cheeky back heel on the edge of the area found James Pinnock, who made no mistake and planted the ball in to the bottom corner.

Paul almost doubled the lead three minutes later, but with only the goalkeeper to beat he fired well over the bar.

Controversy swept around the ground shortly after as Horsham equalised with a goal which had a suspicion of handball.

Former Ashford Town striker Claude Seanla appeared to control the ball with his hand before slotting the ball into the net.

The referee gave the goal to the disbelief of the large majority of the crowd and the decision seemed to affect the home side.

The Stones kept plugging away and came close to regaining the lead when Nugent's header from a corner was cleared off the line.

Maidstone surged forward in the final minutes of the game, but they could not find the all important winning goal.

DENIED: James Pinnock (right) gave Maidstone the lead before a controversial equaliser secured a share of the points

Just before the break Horsham worried the Maidstone defence, as Darren Budd forced Andy Walker to produce a smart save.

Maidstone struggled in the opening minutes of the second half and Walker was called upon on more than one occasion to keep the score level.

Horsham's early efforts forced Maidstone to up their game and they came close to opening the scoring with a header from Bradbrook and a shot from Nathan Paul.



UNDER WAY: (l-r) Chairman Paul Alcock (left), school headmaster Joe Davies and councillor Brian Moss

Training facility on the right track

ATHLETICS

WORK has begun on Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club's new state-of-the-art training facility and is on course to be ready for a July opening.

The club have joined forces with Sutton Valence School and Maidstone Borough Council to fund the eight lane running track to be built on the school site in the county town.

After receiving the final go ahead from the council, construction began on the £794,000 project this week, with completion likely to be in July. The club have been trying to build a permanent base in Maidstone for 25 years.

Club chairman, Paul Alcock, said: "The track will be one of the finest in the region and a facility we've been looking forward to for 25 years."

Club members will train there five days a week, meeting the school's policy to widen access to its sports facilities.

The club plan to open the facility by hosting the Kent Relay Championships in September.



Picture MARTIN WATSON

IN CONTENTION: Aylesford Bulls (in blue and red) battled hard to keep close to the chasing pack in London South East 3

Bulls close in on leaders

RUGBY

Aylesford Bulls 24 Warlingham 7

AYLESFORD Bulls moved to within a point of second place in London South East 3 with a convincing win against fellow high-flyers Warlingham.

Bulls were keen to show they are a better side than the one that lost 56-0 to Warlingham at the start of the season and started at a good pace.

Aylesford looked the more threatening and on a number of occasions poor decision making meant they missed out on promising scoring opportunities.

After the opening exchanges, returning fly-half Dave Dorton gave the home side the lead with a successful penalty from 30 metres.

Just before the break, Warlingham

breached the Bulls defence for the first time in the game and scored the opening try of the afternoon. The visitors added the extras to take a 7-3 lead into the interval.

Aylesford came out fighting in the second half and produced some clinical attacking rugby. A slick move involving Mark Beaumont and Mark Dorton saw Beaumont breeze through the Warlingham defence and open the scoring in the second half. Dorton added the extras.

Dorton showed his class with the boot and kicked three further penalties to increase Aylesford's lead to 19-7.

The home side wrapped up the victory in injury time through flanker Marc Howell who drove over the line for the third try. The result leaves Aylesford a point behind second-placed Hove.

This Saturday Bulls travel to Purley John Fisher in London South East 3.

FOOTBALL



Picture STEVE TERRELL

DROPPED: Alan Walker was left disappointed after dropping two points on Saturday

Walker blames ref and poor finishing for Maidstone draw

STONES boss Alan Walker felt a mixture of missed chances and a referee's decision denied Maidstone United three points.

James Pinnock's strike on the hour gave the Stones the lead, but a Horsham equaliser with a suspicion of hand ball earned a point for the Sussex side.

Walker felt the officials contributed to the result of the game, but believed his side should have been comfortably ahead before the crucial decision.

He said: "I would say the officials have contributed to the result. They are probably the only people in the ground who didn't see the blatant hand ball in Horsham's equaliser."

"However, we had enough chances to win the game and we should have taken them."

"The pleasing thing is we played a lot better than we have been in the last few weeks. Again it is another point, but its two points dropped as far as we are concerned."

Walker was happy with his side's improved display. However, after four consecutive draws he knows wins have to come soon if Maidstone are to make a challenge on the Ryman Premier play-offs.

He added: "Playing like that does bode well. We have just got to make sure we take our chances and this game is all about sticking the ball in the net, which we need to do more. We have had four draws on the spin and dropped eight points, so we have got to try and turn these draws into wins. The eight points would have made a massive difference to our league position and we have got to start doing that."

• Log on to www.yourmaidstone.co.uk for a full report on Maidstone United's trip to Harlow Town on Tuesday.

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Darius Charles on Ebbsfleet's chances of returning to Wembley in the FA Trophy

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